A SKETCH OF

BOTH SIDES OF MANITOBA,

PERPETRATED BY

JEFF. GEH,

BEING A NARRATIVE OF

SEVEN YEARS' VARIED EXPERIENCES IN THE PRAIRIE PROVINCE OF THE

DOMINION OF CANADA.

SOMETHING FRESH ON AN INTERESTING SUBJECT.

PRICE, 50 Cents.

NELSONVILLE:
Manitoba Mountaineer Book and Job Printing Establishment,
1881.

INTRODUCTION.

"Both Sides of Manitoba" was written more to while away the long evenings of a Manitoban winter, than with any immediate view to publication. I had been reading one of the average pamphlets on Manitoba, and had arrived at the conclusion that it would not be discouragingly difficult to obtain more entertaining reading. The dose of information was too strong, with my knowledge of the dispensary, and being devoid of all flavoring, had a tendency to induce nausea. The average man does not care to take his physic straight, however good, and doubtless the individual who invented sugar-coated pills realized a fortune.

While turning the subject over in my mind, it occurred to me that a book might be written on Manitoba that people would read purely for the narrative, and that into this narrative might be smuggled occasional items of practical information without seriously affecting the ordinary reader's digestion. It also occurred to me that, as I had plenty of leisure, and as my ideas in regard to what would interest the reading public were so remarkably comprehensive, it would be in order for me to write this presumed excellent book myself. The reasoning was conclusive, and I at once commenced the task. This, in brief, is my method of accounting for the perpetration of the following pages. The manu-

script is now nearly two years old, and hence the narrative does not carry the reader down to date. I know this is pretty rough on the reader, but there is at least the consolation of knowing that in this wretched world it very often happens that our highest enjoyments are ruthlessly dispelled.

The title, "Both Sides of Manitoba," speaks a whole volume for itself. Only great minds can grasp the both sides of great subjects. There is a bare possibility that the book may have defects. At this date, the only book I remember to have read without discovering defects, was a small pamphlet recounting the remarkable performances of a dog belonging to an old lady named Mother Hubbard. I read that pamphlet some years ago.

In conclusion I wish to state that as I was obliged to depend solely on my memory for all the incidents recounted in the narrative, it may be that in that part relating to Winnipeg slight errors of detail may be found. Whatever information can be gleaned from my farming experiences, I consider reliable.

JEFF GEE.

Nelsonville, June 20th, 1881.

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BOTH SIDES OF MANITOBA.

CHAPTER I.

KEY NOTE.

EARLY in January, 1873, an advertisement ap-
ared in the Toronto *Globe* to the following effect:

WANTED—A compositor, to work on the Manitoba Free
ss. Highest wages and permanent situation. References re-
red. Apply to J. M. McGregor, Harriston.

I applied, and so did others to the number of
rty-two. Among my references I enclosed a cer-
cate from Jesse Ketchum Lodge of British Tem-
rs, showing that I was a member in good stand-
of that worthy order.

I have always believed that to that certificate
s mainly due the fact that I obtained the situa-
n; but, of course, Mr. McGregor didn't know
at I had been initiated at one lodge meeting and
thdrew my certificate at the next—and I didn't
lighten him.

What a mere trifle will sometimes change the
hole current of a man's life. This little advertise-

ment, for instance. A week ago, during the cold spell, I had been debating whether I had better go to St. Louis, Memphis, or New Orleans; and now, behold, I was in active preparation for a trip up into the frozen regions of Canada's North-West Territory.

I expected it would be horribly cold; but Sir John Franklin, George Simpson, and other white men had traversed that country, and had wintered even further north than Fort Garry, and, by being careful, I felt satisfied that I, too, could survive an Arctic winter. At any rate, I would stay two years, or perish in the attempt; and then, having realized a fortune, I would return to civilization and enjoy life in ease and luxury.

I don't wish the reader to understand that I considered myself a peculiarly clever young man; not by any means. I fully realized the fact that there were in Toronto, and elsewhere throughout the Dominion, occasional individuals who possessed intellectual and business qualities fully equal—in fact, superior—to my own; but, Manitoba, you know—Indians and half-breeds—that made considerable difference. Wouldn't I astonish the natives!

It did occur to me once that perhaps there were a few white men there ahead of me. A number of Canadian volunteers had, I was aware, been dispatched to that remote Province to quell the half-breed rebellion of '69-'70; but, then, Canadian volunteers did not amount to much—as soldiers they might be all very well, perhaps, but apart from that they were below par. The editors of the newspapers, on the other hand, might amount to something as it was highly probable they could read and write; but, thank goodness, they were few, and room could

e made for all—that is to say for the editors and yself.

All this, I say, did occur to me, and much more f the same kind—that there were merchants and rofessional men, a Provincial Legislature and mem-ers of Parliament, etc.—but it occurred to me in a auzy sort of a way only. It never took definite hape, because I strangled the thought at its birth. had my own idea of the howling wilderness Mani-oba ought to be, and anything that conflicted with hat idea could not be tolerated. What a grand olitician I would have made at that time!

I peopled my howling wilderness with Indians nd half-breeds, and clothed the whole country in urs. I never annoyed myself by considering how would secure the aforementioned fortune in the llotted time; there should be no difficulty in two hole years, and I therefore dismissed the matter rom my mind, although I had a vague sort of no-ion that black fox and sable skins would play an mportant part.

Out of pure generosity to humanity at large, I decided that, on my arrival at my destination, I would supply the outside world with a full account of the country, its capabilities, advantages and drawbacks.

For this very laudable purpose I made choice of three of the leading newspapers of the Dominion, as mediums through which to reach the public. I did not, however, inform the editors of these papers of the honor I proposed to confer on them. I did not propose to write for pay, and it pleased me to imagine how the delighted editors would chuckle on receipt of the important but entirely unexpected manuscript.

To the end of my existence I will feel proud of the judgment and foresight I displayed in this matter. Once, in Pennsylvania, I heard an ex-major say that if Gen. Grant did not show his superlative military capacity in anything else, he did in the selection of his generals, and for that service alone deserved well of all patriotic Americans. So, in the selection of my publishers, I displayed literary sagacity beyond my years, and therefore I can now come before the reading public satisfied that I deserve well of them: because, you see, not one of those newspapers published my correspondence.

On the 2nd of February, 1873, I took leave of Toronto, and commenced my journey to the far North-West. In order to guard against the chances of starvation after passing the confines of civilization my kind landlady had thoughtfully supplied me with a valise filled to overflowing with turkey-sandwiches, etc, and with this carefully stowed away under my seat, a double-barrelled Derringer in my breast-pocket, and a double-barrelled shot-gun in my trunk, I felt myself reasonably well prepared for emergencies.

Before closing this chapter, I will just remark that, upon taking the stage at Breckenridge, I discovered that the stage company had actually arranged stopping places along their line, where travelers could be accommodated with reasonably good victuals, and accordingly my hamper remained unopened until my arrival in Winnipeg. In my room in the Davis House I opened it, and—paugh!—in my room in the Davis House I shut it again, and sneaked down the back stairs to the back yard, and there I dumped it.

I could have sold my double-barrelled Derringer

my double-barrelled shot-gun without loss
ly after my arrival, but, unfortunately, I re-
d them, and as soon as immigrants commenced
rive in the spring, such articles became a drug
he market and unsaleable.

CHAPTER II.

MANITOBA — SOME OBSERVATIONS — GOOD FARMS — GRASSHOPPERS—FIRST BOAT—LOST CHILD.

Three o'clock on the morning of February 16th. I am in the stage at West Lynne, on Her Majesty's Boundary Line, and the customs' officer is examining baggage in the usual superficial manner.

Reader, would you believe that it is actually RAINING! How is that for an Arctic winter! It is really scandalous, but solid fact nevertheless. However, in the course of an hour or two, the rain changes to sleet, and presently ceases. The weather turns colder, and before night is severe enough to make me feel considerably better; but I can't get over that first shock entirely.

I have a fellow passenger, a comparatively old inhabitant, and the man is actually intelligent—another shock. He is evidently a Canadian—that is to say, he hails from Ontario. If he was from Quebec, we would call him a Qubecer; from Nova Scotia, a Nova Scotian, and so on. I learn this afterwards.

While gliding rapidly along behind two span of willing horses, my companion enlivens the journey with anecdotes of the road. Here is a sample:

"Yonder is Oak Point. The road used to be bad

ng there, and one dark night old Macauley, of acauleyville, was a passenger. He sat on the seat th the driver, and passing along there, the latter ked the old man to hold the reins while he jumped t and went ahead with the lantern. Presently acauley could make out the shape of a team veling the opposite direction, and evidently owding him off the track. The old fellow got cited. He swung the long whip over his head, ve the intruding team a sharp cut across the ces, and shouted, 'Out of the way, there; clear e track for Her Majesty's mail.' There came ar being a smash-up, but the driver came to the scue. He caught the heads of the offending rses, and turned them round to their places in ont of the other team. Macauley felt pretty ean, but the driver didn't say much; said he 'had s opinion of a —— fool, that didn't know his own aders.'".

About thirty miles from West Lynne, we passed little log shanty with a thatched roof. This, my mpanion informed me, was the summer and winter sidence of Mr. Kline, M.PP. This information assured me. Backed by the increasing severity f the weather and the almost total absence of ouses, I felt quite comfortable again.

About three o'clock, we changed horses for the st time, at the house of Mr. Delorme, M.PP. This as another log house with thatched roof. Mr. elorme was in Winnipeg, the Legislature being in ession. Evidently, however, the family were half-reeds. I felt happy.

A few miles further, the road entered a belt of oplar timber, which extended the rest of the way nto Winnipeg. About six o'clock, we descended

abruptly into a narrow valley, as level as a floor at the bottom, probably fifty or sixty yards wide, and extending to right and left as far as I could see in the dim light. I remarked how extremely level the bottom was, and my companion smiled and said,

"Yes; we are crossing the Assiniboine. That is Fort Garry at the top of the bank."

"And how far to Winnipeg?"

"Oh, just a little distance. Winnipeg and Fort Garry—it's all the same."

"But I thought Fort Garry was fifteen or twenty miles from Winnipeg?"

"No, no; that is Lower Fort Garry. This is the original Fort Garry.

Five minutes more and the stage had pulled up at the Davis House. There was a number of red-coated volunteers in the bar-room, nearly all of them more or less drunk. Just as I expected.

While I am waiting supper, let me relate an incident that occurred in Toronto shortly before I left. Discussing the route to Manitoba with a friend one day, I had occasion to refer to Pembina. I called it Pem-bee-na; my friend objected, and was emphatic that it should be pronounced Pem-by-na. We agreed, however, that the emphasis should be placed on the middle syllable.

At Grand Forks, I asked the landlord how far it was to Pembeena. He looked at me with a puzzled expression. I had evidently pronounced it wrong, so, repeating the question, I inquired,

"How far is it to Pembyna?"

Still he seemed puzzled; then, suddenly, his face cleared, and he said, smiling,

"It is about sixty miles to Pembinaw."

Instinctively I glanced at his jaw.

ter supper, I inquired for the *Free Press* office, was informed it was out on the prairie about a-mile.

Better not go to-night," the bar-tender said; might get lost."

didn't think so; it was a clear night, and I d make the endeavor, anyway, if he would give bearings. He came to the door and pointed n along the street.

First or second house on the right, after you s Brown's bridge. Sign board in front."

here was no sidewalk, and, accordingly, I took middle of the road. Came to a bridge, pre- ly, over a narrow gully—Brown's bridge. rie to the right, prairie to the left, prairie in t. Stepped of the road, directly, and went ging through the crust in the deep snow. Re- ed my steps, and examined points. Couldn't the road, but could feel it solid under my feet. veled carefully, and presently made out a house he right. Examined it critically, but found no -board. Another house, a few hundred yards her on. Ah, yes; there it is. Sign-board, "Free ss office."

entered and walked up to the stove at the other . There was a lamp burning on the table. ere was a young man, also,—Canadian, evidently, nd a large, handsome dog. The young man was gaged in giving this dog the outward semblance a zebra. He had him artistically decorated with nter's ink, and was putting on the finishing ches, and looking extremely silly, as I entered. ook in the situation, and again remarked, inter- lly—"just as I expected."

I asked for Mr. Luxton, and was informed that

he was up-stairs, but would be down in a few minutes. Standing beside the stove, I surveyed my surroundings. Presses, type, etc. But how remarkably new the building looked; ah, that was it—no paint. Afterwards, I found this "newness" to be characteristic of Winnipeg.

The buildings were all frame, without exception, and most of them were innocent of paint.

Presently, Mr. Luxton came down, and I handed him my letter. He was not an Indian; nor a half-breed. I got down off my high-heel boots. Somehow the editor of the *Free Press* had the manners and appearance of a gentleman; and, strange enough, he appeared to be educated.

After having kindly inquired concerning my journey, he turned his attention to the young man and the dog:

"Brown, what have you been doing with Jack?"

"Been giving him the rudiments."

"You should have better sense. Get some oil and clean it off."

"All right, just as you say; but if you'd let me alone, I'd make him the most intelligent dog in the North-West, if there's any virtue in printer's ink."

During the evening I learned, indirectly, that there were several educated men in town, the Lieutenant-Governor, for instance, and others. Worst of all, I received a faint glimmer of the fact that there were native whites and half-breeds who could talk English!

I still, I am proud to state, adhered to my generous resolution to enlighten the outer world on all matters relating to Manitoba. Accordingly, next morning I commenced the task, and, having thoroughly taken in the country during the night,

ed whole pages of foolscap, and after a hard work, had the satisfaction of knowing that I faithfully performed my duty to intending grants and the world at large. After posting manuscripts, I experienced a sense of relief nd expression. The fate of those manuscripts been duly chronicled in Chapter one.

e second day after my arrival was the coldest of the season—thermometer 42 below zero. I disappointed, for apparently no one had any tion of freezing to death. If anything, people ed rather livelier than usual, rushing here and e, smart as crickets. If this was the coldest her they could scare up in Manitoba, I might about as well have remained in Ontario. Standn the warm room, looking through the windows e bright sunshine, I could hardly imagine it was at all; and even when I stepped out to walk e office, I did not at first consider it very sharp. e air was perfectly calm, not a breath stirring, the crisp snow glistened and sparkled in the throwing up rays that dazzled the eyes. Suddy, I felt a sharp, quick pain in the end of my e, like the prick of a needle. That was Jack st's *avant courier*, but I didn't know it, and rdingly when I got to the office, my olfactory n had the appearance of having been chisled m a block of marble and stuck on. A handful snow soon remedied it. This mischance relieved a little, but on the whole I felt rather discourd. Such a winter might be a little severe for ronto, but for Manitoba, it was simply conmptible.

In short, a very few days' residence in Winnipeg isfied me of what an egregious ass I had been,

and my preconceived ideas of Manitoba vanished "like the thin fabrics of a vision."

Winnipeg, I discovered, was a city of, perhaps a thousand inhabitants—a remarkable city in many ways. Its newness was impressive, its energy inspiring, and its trade astounding. It might be called a city of bachelors, and these bachelors Canada's brightest sons; for if they did not possess intelligence and enterprise in a high degree, they would not be here. The retail trade of the entire Province was conducted in Winnipeg, and the wholesale trade for a thousand miles beyond the western Provincial limit. It was the capital and the country towns and villages all in one, and all the money expended by the Dominion Government on surveys, maintenance of volunteers, etc., almost immediately went into circulation in this remarkable city. For this reason, every inhabitant was wealthy—a few in reality, the balance in prospective, and, remarkable to state, each citizen had confidence in his fellow. This feeling, however, died a natural death before the close of the year.

In the course of a month or two my mind became disabused of a disreputable idea that had possessed me from my youth up, and filled my soul with anguish during my temporary sojourns in various States of the American Union. This was an idea that a native born Canadian had very little to inspire him to grand acts of patriotic devotion. Canada, no doubt, was a very pretty woodland country, and fairly prosperous as an English colony; and if it had consented to join the other English colonies a hundred years ago, would in all probability have made a State of the United States not to be sneezed at. But it didn't consent, and consequently Cana-

s were neither Englishmen nor Americans—
were only Canadians, and who ever heard any
boast of being a Canadian?

scarcely know by what process I became
red of the inspiring truth—all who live in this
North-West are compelled to realize it—but I
ke to the proud fact that I had for birth-right
enship in the grandest country of the globe.
w I gloried in Canada! what delicious thrills of
nse patriotism swelled through me! The
minion of Canada—a country of noble lakes
mighty rivers, of millions of acres of luxuriant
rie, stretching a thousand miles from the im-
se forests of Ontario on the east to the ever-
ng hills and snow-capped peaks of the Rocky
ntains on the west. A glorious country, with
orests and its fisheries, and its wealth of coal
iron, silver and gold. Who could doubt that
time was approaching when these mineral
sures would furnish occupation to future gener-
ns of man, and teeming millions would transform
boundless plains to wheat fields whose luxuri-
e would fill the granaries of the world. Looking
ough the dim vista of the future what more
ural than to behold the "conquering armies of
northern hordes" take up their line of victorious
rch on the corrupt and effeminate nations of the
uth, and thus settle once for all the vexed question
the "political destiny of Canada."

As previously stated, the Provincial Legislature
as in session at the time of my arrival, and, among
her measures before the House was a "Bill to
corporate the City of Winnipeg." As it was well
nown that the bill would meet considerable op-
sition in several important particulars, a good

deal of interest was manifested by citizens generally. In the Upper Chamber certain amendments were made and the bill returned to the Assembly, which body objected to the amendments as interfering with the revenue, a matter beyond the jurisdiction of the Legislative Council, and, accordingly, dispatched a message requesting that the obnoxious amendments be withdrawn. The Council refused to accede, and, on the ruling of the Speaker, the bill was thrown out. Thus, for the present, Winnipeg remained unincorporated.

Don't imagine, however, that Winnipeg accepted this misfortune without protest. *Kawin!* (This word is Chippewyan for "No." It was very fashionable when I first landed in Winnipeg, but has since fallen into disuse). The citizens formed into a committee of the whole, and waited in a body on the Legislature. But the noble legislators could not be found—they were dispersed in the various hardware stores, purchasing revolvers. It was at this period that I could profitably have disposed of my double-barrelled Derringer.

Rightly or wrongly, the failure of the bill to pass, was generally attributed to the unpopular leader of the Government, Hon. H. J. Clarke, then Attorney-General, and after the failure of the committee to interview the House, certain unknown individuals waited on that gentleman with materials wherewith to transform him into a sort of Satanic fowl—tar and feathers. Mr. Clarke, however, had made himself exceedingly scarce.

And now I have to chronicle a disreputable piece of business. Foiled in their endeavor to find the Attorney-General, these unknown individuals directed their attention to Hon. Dr. Bird, Speaker of

Legislative Assembly, a gentleman highly
med and not at all censured for his official
n. Late at night a horse and cutter dashed up
he Doctor's medical dispensary. A stranger
ed out and hastily informed the honorable
leman that a dying patient in Kildonan urgently
ired his professional attendance. After a
isome day of turmoil and excitement, a drive
even miles on a bitter cold night was no light
ter, but, true to his sense of duty, the Doctor
ily donned his great-coat and took his seat with
messenger. When opposite the Point Douglas
se, at the northern limit of the city, several
lies rushed forward and upset their victim out
he cutter. While one daubed his head with tar,
her stuck on a handful of feathers, the ruffians
quickly dispersed, and the Doctor was allowed
nd his way home as best he might.

When this outrage became known, a howl of
gnation ascended. The Legislature offered a
ard of $1,000 for such information as would
to the conviction of the guilty parties, and in
public estimation, the perpetrators were branded
cowardly ruffians. There is no doubt, however,
that, had the Attorney-General been in Dr.
d's place, the perpetrators would just as em-
atically have been lauded as heroes.

Such is the history, in brief, of the first incorpor-
ion bill. What was Winnipeg's loss, however,
s the country's gain, for to the defeat of this bill
ay be directly traced the abolition of the Legisla-
ve Council two years later. At the following
ssion, the incorporation bill passed its several
ages without difficulty, and Winnipeg became a
uly appointed city.

In the month of April, the irrepressible Brown, who was at this time a sort of *Free Press* office supernumerary—in the summer he sold ordinary sewing machines at $100 each, and needles at $3 per dozen, and sold readily, too,—induced me to go land-hunting; that is, there were three one-acre lots for sale on the Ross estate, opposite our office, but two blocks back from Main street, and Brown and I took a half-holiday and went prospecting. We could get these three lots for $800, on easy terms, and in a few months, Brown assured me, would double our money.

We had scarcely left the office when I met with an adventure. At the other side of the street, and running parellel with it, was an abrupt, narrow gully or wash-out, probably ten feet deep or so. But what did I know of narrow gullies; it was filled to the level with drifted snow, and down under that snow was two or three feet of ice-cold water, the result of the bright, warm, sunshiny weather. I walked into this gully with the innocence of unsuspecting youth; but the generous, the brave, the noble Brown, came to the rescue, and with his assistance I regained the bank. Perhaps I wouldn't have thought so highly of Mr. Brown, if I had known that he had purposely let me take the lead in order to discover if the crust would bear—the wretch.

We crossed this gully further up, and stood the sole inhabitants of the mighty plain. Behind us was civilization—the *Free Press* office and another house; before us stretched the vast wilderness—a wilderness of swamp willows. Before proceeding a hundred yards, I wanted to turn back,—the slush of snow and water was up to our knees, and getting

r as we advanced. Brown persuaded me to , however, and after another hundred yards or formed me that right here were those three cre lots.

then discoursed at length, and with the siasm of an orator. Winnipeg had doubled pulation every year since the rebellion, and ubtedly would this year; the city was bound ow in this direction, and everything pointed to kelihood of this being the fashionable quarter e great Winnipeg of the future, etcetera, and n.

didn't interrupt him, but standing there among willows I calmly heard him out. Then I ered myself as follows:

Brown, go tell that to the marines. I always l water, and never took a journey by boat when ld go by land. If you want to invest in this , all right, do so. When Winnipeg has a cient population you may, perhaps, make money eeping a boat-house in summer and a skating- in winter; or, come to think, when the water es at the proper stage of decomposition in ust, you might bottle it, and drive a lucrative e in mineral water. But I'm an orphan, and efore I'll not invest.

A gentleman named Burrows purchased one of se lots, and cut it into eight. In June, I think, sold by public auction, and realized some fifteen dred dollars. I attended the sale in the capacity spectator. The land was plainly a willow amp, but has since been drained by the city; of rse, it is all built up now, and for a mile beyond. the proceeds of this sale, Mr. Burrows was abled eventually to operate extensively in real

estate. His sales of city lots in the Burrows estate and the Mulligan estate were advertised all over the Dominion.

About this time I discovered that our local editor perpetrated some huge swindles on the Ontario newspapers. For instance, he supplied a local item as follows:

"ENTERPRISE.—In the northern part of the city a brand new saw mill was got into operation in short order. At 7 o'clock on Thursday morning the lot was vacant, and at 10 o'clock the building was erected and the saw running. Winnipegers do things in a hurry."

Of course such an item as that was greedily captured by the newspaper men below, and speedily went the rounds of the Ontario press.

I felt interested in this mill myself, and asked Jack where it was situated. He stepped to the window, and said,

"Here it is."

I looked out, and beheld—four upright posts, a log, two men, and a whip-saw.

Several similar instances might be recounted but probably the one is sufficient.

I must not forget to relate a conversation I held with a Kildonan farmer in regard to potatoes. Kildonan is a parish seven miles north of Winnipeg—the Scotch colony brought out by Lord Selkirk fifty or sixty years ago. This farmer had been to town with a load of potatoes, and—thirsty for knowledge—I plied him with questions:

"Are potatoes a good crop in this country?"

"Well, yes; I've got as much as six hundred bushels off an acre."

"That's a big crop. What do you get for them?"

"Oh, from a dollar to a dollar and a half the
hel. I sold them to day for a dollar and a
rter."

"I should think you farmers would get rich at
t?"

"Ah, but sometimes we lose them in the winter.
ey freeze. I had over two hundred bushels
en this winter."

"Indeed. That was a serious loss."

"Well, y-e-s; but I sold them for a dollar and a
rter the bushel all the same."

The fortitude that man displayed in adversity
truly admirable.

A few days after this a rather important indi-
ual called at the office. He didn't look impor-
, but he was, all the same; for the reason that
possessed the best farm in the Province. Of
rse, we had only his word for it, but that was
cient. You may have doubts when a man
ing, but there is no mistaking when he tells the
h, and this man plainly did not prevaricate.
flashing eyes, smiling countenance, and whole-
ed earnestness convinced you beyond cavil, that
man—who hailed from Springfield, a new
lement north east from Winnipeg fifteen miles
id really and truly possess the best natural farm
the American continent.

fairly envied this fortunate individual for the
ce of a week or two, when I met another man,
o, just as emphatically, just as enthusiastically,
just as convincingly, assured me that his was,
several important points, which he enumerated,
all odds, the best and most desirable farm in the
rth-West. This man hailed from Scratching
er, a settlement forty miles south of Winnipeg.

I could not doubt this man's word; he plainly felt positively assured and convinced that his farm was *the* farm of the Province. But no more could I doubt the Springfield man. What was I to believe?

"See here, friend," said I; "don't you think there might possibly be a farm in Springfield equal to yours?"

"In Springfield! Well, I should say not. Why I wouldn't give five acres at Scratching River for a whole section in Springfield. Springfield's a poor affair—don't believe there's a good farm in it. If you want to see the best settlement and the best farm in this country, just come to my place."

To make matters worse, later on I chanced across a man from Palestine, one hundred miles west of Winnipeg, who was so brim full of the idea that *he* had the best farm in Manitoba, as to fairly bubble over. He was saturated, so to speak, with Palestine, and felt so overjoyed at his remarkable good fortune in locating in that paradise of the North-west, that he could talk of nothing else. Said he,

"I don't see why the deuce people settle along the Red River. There's Scratching River, now, and Springfield, and Rockwood—I suppose they're good enough in their way; but they're not a patch to Palestine—not a patch. The Springfield people blow and talk, and the Rockwood people blow and talk, but if you want land, young man,—land that is land, and any amount of it—go west. No grass-hoppers either."

About two years after this, when I located on my "claim" at Pembina Mountains, I made the startling discovery that I—even I—had captured

m compared with which all other farms were bog or sandy desert. And what a magnificent ng country it was as a whole—abundance of , abundance of water, plenty of hay and not uch, and the beautiful range of hills to shelter om the fierce western gales. Ah, you poor tunates of Palestine, and Springfield, and ching River, how you missed it in not settling is delectable section.

ere was one matter, however, that was gall bitterness to me—in fact, is yet—all my neigh- are seized with the senseless delusion that *they* idually, have the best farm in Manitoba.

resume it would hardly do to write of '73 in toba, without mentioning the plague to which untry is liable and which had visited it the ous summer and worked destruction on the of the husbandman. I refer, of course, to rasshoppers. In August previous they had in one vast cloud, and had settled along the River in a broad belt of perhaps fifty or sixty . The year they come in the damage they do t extensive, comparatively, crops generally too far advanced to suffer much from their ges; late crops, however, are destroyed. But hrough the warm fall weather the process of bation progresses, and myriads on myriads of are deposited, which the warm sun of May wing will transform into diminutive grasshop- , complete save the wings. Immediately they hatched, these insects commence the work of station. At first they do not travel, and their rations are scarcely appreciated; but some ht, sunshiny day in the latter part of June, n about half-developed, the whole vast army

makes a forward movement on the hop. Catch one, carry it into the house, and on releasing it you find that it travels in the same direction as those outside, and in that same direction will they fly as soon as their wings are properly developed. While on the wing, adverse winds may drive them from their course; but plainly they are of one mind, so to speak, as to the direction of their flight, and they will not rise if the wind is contrary.

As these insects do not migrate till August, the work of destruction goes on all through the summer months. No use for the farmer to sow his fields, the grain is scarcely above the ground when immense swarms of grasshoppers cover it, and in a few days a field of rank, luxuriant grain is changed to a worthless, dreary expanse of desolation. Garden vegetables, potatoes, etc., are eaten off to the ground, and even the bark of trees does not escape the voracious appetite of these pests. In some instances, the tough, wiry prairie grass, itself, is seriously affected; indeed, everything green suffers to a greater or less extent. Of all that the farmer grows, peas, perhaps, are least appreciated by the grasshoppers, and even this crop does not escape scathless, large quantities of the pods being severed from the vines.

Such was the agricultural outlook in '73. The native farmers refused to sow, but the new-comers cropped their land in the face of this mighty evil, hoping against hope. Their efforts were futile, however; there was a seed-time, but inside of this sixty-mile belt, there was no harvest. Beyond, in the new settlement to the west, immense crops were reaped, and times were flush—wheat $2 per bushel, potatoes, $2 per bushel, etc., and a ravenous

ket. The west, it is needless to say, thrived
derfully.
urther on, in the course of my farming experi-
e, I will probably have a little more to say
cerning grasshoppers.
n the 2nd of May, I think, the first boat of the
son arrived; and how eagerly all Manitobans
ked forward to its advent. Nearly every one
friends to arrive, and the shelves of the mer-
nts were empty and not to be replenished until
igation opened; and no one, mind you, would
t for the second or third boat; no, everybody
everything was coming by the first boat—the
ious, gorgeous first boat. On paper that boat
ld carry freight and passengers enough to load
ndred ocean steamers; actually, she was a flat
omed river boat of two hundred tons.
o one, not similarly placed, can imagine with
t intense longing the inhabitants of this com-
nity, shut off, by a gap of three hundred miles,
m the nearest railway communication, looked
ward to the opening of navigation. How eagerly
newspapers were scanned for telegraphic news
m up the river. From day to day, little extras
re issued by the press, announcing that the ice
s moving at Moorhead, then at Grand Forks,
n at Pembina, then, Heaven be praised, at
innipeg. The river had risen ten feet, and the
was crushing and grinding, and breaking and
aring on its way to Lake Winnipeg.
Then an extra announced that the *International*
d left her winter quarters at Grand Forks, was
king on freight at Moorhead, had left Moorhead,
as again at Grand Forks, was ten miles from
embina, was at Pembina, was ten miles this

side of Pembina, behind an ice-jam. Then a few hours of bursting anxiety, and then, a few miles up the river, the long, shrill scream of the steam whistle.

What a scramble there was then. Winnipeg rushed to the steamboat landing almost to a man—and woman, too, for that matter—and talked, and laughed, and gesticulated, and went fairly wild. The glorious old steamboat came snorting and hissing down the Red River, swept gracefully round, and, entering the rapid Assiniboine, came slowly and grandly up to the landing, amid huzzas, and yells, and waving of hats. Half an hour, then, of rapid, excited conversation, shaking hands, and so on, and the great event of the season for '73 was over.

All the fresh arrivals, it is almost needless to say, had their own ideas of Winnipeg and Manitoba. Some of them discovered their error in a week, some in a month, and with some it took a whole summer.

One old gentleman was really amusing. He was a Government official, and out of pure charity devoted nearly all his spare time to looking after the physical and moral interests of Winnipeg. Every week he furnished the newspapers with communications suggesting this and that, assuring the citizens of its desirability and practicability, and generously offering himself to guide the scheme to a successful issue. He always subscribed his name to these letters, apparently as an assurance of good faith. This gentleman, probably, never learned that his ideal Manitoba was a myth, and, after a few months residence, left the Province, filled with supreme disgust—wouldn't live in such a country. In order

lieve my readers, I will just remark that the try survived.

ere is, I have observed, in all very new coun- or sections of country, a bond of sympathy, unites each man to his neighbor. So, when, morning in June, a messenger arrived from ngfield with the announcement that a little four- -old son of Mr. Wm. Service had strayed away his home two days before, and all efforts to him had been fruitless, there swelled through Winnipeg pulse a great throb of sympathy. e unfortunate parents of the child were ied out with unceasing search, and the neigh- for miles around for two days and two nights been untiring in their efforts to restore the little lerer to his home. Springfield was exhausted, must take a breathing spell; but the parents wild with grief, they could not rest. The boy had no food but wild strawberries; an- r day might be fatal; even now he might be d. Would Winnipeg supply fresh search parties? was the burden of the message. An exhausted helpless community appealed to Winnipeg.

Would Winnipeg supply fresh search parties? hould say so. Every man, woman and child ted to turn out; the entire community would pond *en masse*, if need be. But, no, that would folly—active men were wanted, men who would themselves get lost, and thus occasion fresh rch parties.

The men and teams were speedily forthcoming— r office turned out its entire force of employees. A mile from the house of the bereaved family, various search parties separated. They scoured e prairie in every direction; backwards and for-

wards, right and left, from early morning till dusk at night, and then, weary and dispirited, returned to their wagons. The search was a failure for that day. Mrs. Service was postrated; it distracted her to think of her little half-clad and starving child wandering over the great, horrible prairie.

Fresh parties arrived and the search continued. The fourth day passed, and the fifth, and the sixth—no result. Hope was dead. The child was but scantily clad in summer clothing, and the nights were cold; he must long since have perished from hunger or cold, or both. As a last resort, a reward of $200 was offered for the recovery of the missing boy, and the matter was allowed to drop.

On the tenth day from the time little Willie had strayed away, Winnipeg was electrified with the joyful tidings that the lost child had been found, alive and apparently none the worse for his ramblings. It seemed hardly possible, but was true, nevertheless. The little fellow had lived on grasshoppers, strawberries, and mud—not a very epicurean diet, truly. He had wandered five miles from home, and was discovered by a French half-breed. I will let the half-breed tell his own story:

"Me and my wife, and my son and his wife, and my son-in-law and my daughter, go down to Springfield and camp, the seventh day after the child was lost. We look two days, and find nothing. In the morning of the third day, I get up in my cart and look all round; there was nothing. Then, before I get down, I see one crane rise up 'bout a mile off and fly away, then another crane, then another crane. What make crane fly? must be something there. Then I get down and tell my son, and say,

"'Go that way.'

"But my son say,

"'No, go this way.'

"And my son-in-law say go this way, too; so we o, and look and look, and walk and walk, and on't find nothing again. Then we come back, and y woman make fire to boil tea. I think must go it and look where cranes was, but my son and n-in-law say,

"'No, won't go; go yourself."

"So I think a little while, and then I take my in and walk away half-a-mile, and don't see no-ing. Walk a little farther, and stop and look ound—there was nothing. Then I think I turn ck; but, no, not turn back, go on to willows arter mile away. When I get to willows, I stop d stand on my toes and stretch and look all round gain, this way and that way, and don't see any-ing yet. Then I say,

"'You old fool, there is nothing. You tired ough; go back and get some tea!'

"I turn back and walk two, three hundred yards, stop; hear a queer noise. I look; don't see no-ing. Go on ten, fifteen steps; hear queer noise gain. Stop; look; don't see nothing. Listen; , queer, queer noise. I cock my gun. Never ard such queer noise. I think go back for my n; no, go on. I get my gun ready and go on easy. Hear queer noise again, eight, ten yards off. look; see dirt like badger hole. I stop. Then put out my gun and walk close, slow. I point y gun, and look down. Hole dark; can't see thing. I bend my head and look down, close. ee hand—black, black; four fingers, no thumb. I aw back. I not afraid; but queer noise and black and without thumb—don't like it. I look again;

hand move, and thumb come out from under. Then I make little noise, and two big eyes look up—wild, wild. I see face. I drop gun, put out my hands, and say,

"'Oh, my poor little boy, come out, come out. Your father and mother look all over prairie and can't find you. Come out and I take you to your mother.'

"He say nothing, but look—big eyes, scared. I ask him again come out, but he not move. Then I kneel down, and say,

"'My poor little boy, come out, and I take you to your mother, I give you plenty bread, plenty tea, you poor little boy, you must be hungry. Come with me—I feed you, I warm you, I bring you home.'

"I reaching down all the time, and then I catch him by the hand, and say,

"'Now, my little boy, I got you, I bring you to my wife. Don't be afraid; I not hurt you.'

"He draw back, but I take him out, and put my arms around him, and hold him up tight, and pat him on the head, and he never say nothing. Then I take him to my wife, and my wife, and my daughter, and my son's wife, hurry up, and make broth, and give him some in cup. My, but he hungry. Want to drink it all; but my wife say,

"'No, not too much; I give you more after awhile.'

"Then he go to sleep, and my wife wake him soon and give him more broth. Then he sleep again, and my son go and tell his mother, and his mother come and take him away."

CHAPTER III.

OMINION DAY—LORD GORDON—AND OTHER MATTERS.

Dominion Day was celebrated in the usual man-
r in Winnipeg—horse races, excursions, pic-nics,
aledonian games, etc. Brown was an athlete—at
ast, he imagined he was, which amounts to about
e same thing. He entered for all the games, and
ut of a possible eight, carried off seven prizes.
rown felt proud, and so did we, his friends and
dmirers. He failed to gain a prize for putting the
one, because there were three entries and only
wo prizes. In the other seven there were likewise
hree entries, but fortunately there were three prizes
lso, and with reasonable exertion Brown succeeded
n carrying off all the third prizes. Unfortunately
e was induced to start in the all-fours race for a
ew print dress. He only started, though; the
train was too severe, and something ripped. Brown
mmediately stopped and elbowed his way out
hrough the crowd. He was seen on the grounds
o more that day, neither was he with the steam-
oat excursion at night. In Winnipeg things passed
ff quiet enough, but not so in other quarters.

The following day the city was in a perfect tremor
f excitement over the attempted kidnapping of
Lord Gordon, a remarkable individual who had
een for some time residing at Headingly, twelve

miles west from Winnipeg. The kidnappers were United States detectives, and having seized their man at the residence of a neighboring gentleman, conveyed him rapidly seventy miles to the International Boundary Line. Here they were met by Mr. Bradley, J. P., customs officer at West Lynne, who, acting upon telegraphic information from Winnipeg, promptly arrested the detectives and released Mr. Gordon.

What a time there was, to be sure. I don't propose to dwell on it. Gordon, it transpired, had sharped the sharpers of New York, and obtained possession of a million dollars or so in American railway bonds. His trick, however, was partly discovered, and himself arrested, but he succeeded in getting out on bail. Shortly after he disgorged a portion of his ill-gotten wealth, and fled with the balance to the then comparatively unknown Canadian North-West. But the gentleman who had signed his bail-bond, a Mr. Roberts, succeeded in tracing the luckless Gordon to his retreat, and the detectives, now prisoners, were engaged to bring him back to durance vile.

When put upon their trial for kidnapping, the detectives, Hoy and Kegan, acknowledged the act, but claimed a legal right in the premises, under the old Common Law of England. After an exhaustive trial, a purely nominal penalty was adjudged by the court.

Meantime, Lord Gordon had started on an extensive hunting excursion to the west, probably with the intention of never returning. Such an arrangement, however, did not suit the views of at least one individual in Winnipeg, the notorious Attorney-General Clarke. This not over-scrupu-

ous official, had the unfortunate Gordon followed and brought back on a most contemptible charge, trumped-up for the occasion. The sympathy of the people had been with Gordon throughout, and when after developements showed clearly that the disreputable Attorney-General had attempted a systematic course of blackmail, that high official received that full measure of public odium which his many political and moral delinquencies justly merited.

Gordon was released, and again took up his residence at Headingly, where, the following summer the last act in the Lord Gordon drama transpired. Before coming to America, Gordon had succeeded in defrauding certain Edinburgh jewelers and others, in a remarkable manner. He was, in fact, a remarkable man, and having reduced fraud to a science, he mastered the science. By some means, however, his American bailsman, Roberts, got on track of these old Scotch swindles, and having placed himself in communication with the Edinburgh jewelers, legal steps were by them taken to have Gordon arrested and brought to account. To this end, a warrant was issued at Toronto, and a couple of detectives of that city engaged to serve it. On the arrival of these detectives here, they induced certain well-known citizens to accompany them to Headingly. Gordon at once realized the fact that he was undone; the Toronto warrant served in the presence of Winnipeg gentlemen of established reputation, convinced him that his case was hopeless, and he accordingly expressed his willingness to submit to the arrest, but asked permission to change his wearing apparel. Permission having been readily granted, Gordon stepped into

his sleeping apartment and closed the door. In a moment the report of a pistol rang out, and when the detectives rushed into the room, Gordon lay on the floor with a bullet through his brain. Thus had he ended forever a troubled and checquered existence.

I have confined myself in this matter to the merest outline of the Gordon affair. To go into it in detail would require too much space; but I have endeavored to narrate all the leading facts of a case, that, in its several varying incidents, created quite a sensation in the Winnipeg mind, and which more than one prominent citizen will long have occasion to remember.

I have already remarked on the easy financial feeling of business men in this metropolis of the North-West, and I will now proceed to illustrate it. I had arrived in Winnipeg, a perfectly unknown stranger, about the middle of February, and in April, finding myself possessed of hoarded treasure to the extent of nearly a hundred dollars, I concluded to build a house—no sneak of a house, either, but a good respectable house, capable of accommodating two or three families comfortably, as comfort went in those days. The first thing was a building lot. I found one to suit me, and purchased it for $200, half down—all my capital gone already. Next, I went to the mill-owners and arranged for $1,000 worth of lumber; I then advertised for tenders for building, and let the contract for $700. Being under age, I had a little trouble in negotiating my terms, as I could not give a valid bond; but at the time of which I write, any respectable man of industrious habits could, if he were so minded, incur liabilities enough to embarrass a millionaire.

bout midsummer this house was completed, and I d the satisfaction of at once leasing it to the innipeg Ladies' School, at a rental of $40 per onth, and five months' rent in advance. Like other ealthy business men, I now felt financially easy yself.

In August, I threw up my situation, as composi-r, on the *Free Press*, and accepted charge of the echanical department of the ancient *Nor'-Wester*, en controlled by Hon. Dr. Schultz. Shortly erwards, the Doctor disposed of his interest in e concern to Mr. E. L. Barber, and the latter ntleman not being a practised writer, engaged r. Frank Lynn to edit the sheet. The office was t paying running expenses—had not been for ars; but while I live I shall never cease to admire e noble efforts put forth by Mr. Lynn during the suing winter, to secure patronage enough to pay s own weekly salary and mine; because, you see, inters were not to be had, and my services were cessary to the continuance of the publication, and e continuance of the publication was neccessary the continuance of Mr. Lynn's salary—a wheel ithin a wheel, you observe. Mr. Barber positively fused to sink any more money in the concern, d therefore the paper had to depend entirely on s own resources. Thanks to Mr. Lynn's energy it owded through, and afterwards Mr. Barber suc-eeded in working the business up to an unusually ofitable point, for a newspaper.

The Red River closed this year about the second third of November, and for nearly six months, r only connection with the outside world would e a tri-weekly mail-stage, dispatched from Breck-nridge, Minn., three hundred miles away.

With the close of navigation, closed the immigration for '73. Manitoba had largely increased her population, but not remarkably so; Brown's prediction with regard to Winnipeg, however, had proved correct—she had doubled her population and more than trebled her wealth. Owing to the plague of grasshoppers, that hung as a pall over the farming community, the bulk of the new-comers had taken up their residence in the rising city, where the extensive building operations of the season had, directly and indirectly, given employment to all. The immigrants were, for the most part, young men, possessed with a spirit of adventure, rather than a desire to settle down to the practical business of life. They came from all parts of the Eastern Provinces, but a remarkably large number hailed from Western Ontario. Here is a stereotyped conversation:

"Where did you come from?"

"Ontario."

"What part?"

"County Huron."

"Going to farm?"

"No; I expect to get work on the new buildings."

"Oh, you're a carpenter?"

"Well, no—not exactly; but I've done a little at it."

A large number of these young men returned to the East, some immediately, some after the lapse of a few months; but the majority remained—a few to become eventually prominent citizens of Manitoba's capital; others to settle down in the new settlements of the Province, and lend their young energy to the opening up of this great, fertile

North-West—a glorious distinction which they will tell with pride to their grandchildren in the years to come, when Canada occupies the proud position of the greatest wheat producing country of the world.

Even of those who departed in that and other years of grasshopper calamity, the bulk have since returned; for there is a charm about our Prairie Province that few can withstand, who have breathed her pure air and noted her immense capabilities, and year after year these mistaken ones come straggling back, generally to deplore the rashness which had induced them to turn their backs on a land so fair and full of promise; for the tide of immigration ever rolls westward, and great sections of country that this year are beyond the limits of civilization, another year will transform into a thriving settlement, brisk with life and activity and enterprise. Immigrants should bear well in mind the words of an old gentleman in Winnipeg, when asked if he liked the country:

"Like it," said he. "I did not come to this country to like it. I came here to live."

CHAPTER IV.

TWO PROMINENT MEN—FAME—BURNED TO DEATH—IMMIGRATION—THUNDER STORMS—LAND HUNTING EXPERIENCES—GRASSHOPPERS AGAIN—POOR BROWN—THE FEVER—ELECTIONS.

'74 marks an epoch in Winnipeg's history, for in this year was she decked out with all the attributes of a full-fledged city—Mayor and Aldermen. To the lot of Mr. F. E. Cornish, a member of the Winnipeg bar and formerly Mayor of London, Ont., fell the honor of being the first Mayor of the first city of the North-West. Quick, talented, a fluent speaker, and possessed of considerable experience of public life, added to the fact of his democratic sentiments, he was just the man to "sway the masses," and the populace generally looked upon him as the "coming man,"—a man who would leave his mark on the pages of our Provincial history. The term of office of the first Provincial Parliament was drawing to a close, a general election would be held at the end of the year, and his friends and admirers confidently expected that Mr. Cornish would come out of the political contest with flying colors; and, beyond doubt, the prospect was decidedly good. The prize was the Premiership.

Some time before this a vacancy had occurred in

he Legislature, owing to the resignation of Hon. D. A. Smith, member for Winnipeg, who was also member for Selkirk in the Dominion House, his resignation having been caused by the passing of the Act to abolish dual representation. At the election held to fill this vacancy, Mr. R. A. Davis, proprietor of the Davis Hotel, had offered himself as a candidate and had been elected. The influence of this somewhat remarkable man was immediately felt in political circles. The Clarke Government had been tottering to its fall, and the event was precipitated by the advent of Mr. Davis in the political arena. The remarkable part of Mr. Davis' career is that he, utterly devoid of experience in public matters, an indifferent speaker, not at all considered clever, and laboring under the social stigma begotten of his business as hotel-keeper, should at once seize the wheel and guide the Provincial ship of state safely over dangerous reefs and through lines of menacing and treacherous breakers. But his success is a matter of history; and even at the close of his short but brilliant career, when voluntarily retiring from public life, so firm was the hand with which he held the reins of power, as to leave his indelible stamp on the succeeding Governments.

I have here alluded briefly to two important personages, at the time of which I write—the one experienced, genial, talented and popular; the other, talented, perhaps, but reserved, inexperienced, and doubtfully popular. The name of the one will, in a few years, drop into oblivion; that of the other occupies a prominent place in Manitoba's history. Both of these men seek honor and fame; which will secure it?

After all, what is fame?—a bauble, it is not worth the trouble. Some seek fame a lifetime and find it not; others obtain it without an effort—it is thrown at them. So it was with Joe Cook. Joe was a compositor in the *Nor'-Wester* office, and had no thought of fame, but he received it, nevertheless. In this way:

Preparing the type for press one day, a paragraph of three lines was needed to fill up the bottom of a column. Such a paragraph was not to be had, so, picking up a composing stick, I searched my memory for something suitable, and after a giant effort, succeeded in unearthing an almost forgotten newspaper funny item. The words were scarcely sufficient, however, and I accordingly added Joe Cook's name, in this way:

"Joseph Cook, the celebrated philosopher, once remarked: 'You can always see a dam by a mill site; but you can't always see a mill by a dam site.'"

Now that item traveled all through the press of Canada and the United States, and the avidity with which newspaper men in general seized upon it, demonstrated clearly enough that Mr. Cook's philosophy was thoroughly appreciated and understood. Thus, you see, as if by magic, I had transformed the innocent, harmless Joe Cook into a renowned philosopher, whose most trivial remark received the admiration it deserved throughout the length and breadth of a continent. How easy; and, yet, such is fame!

Let me illustrate this same matter in another direction. In the spring of '74, Mr. Frank Lynn severed his regular connection with the *Nor'-Wester*, but nevertheless contributed an occasional article,

which were always welcome, he being an acknowledge able and elegant writer—indeed the *Nor'-Wester* contained at this period articles from the pens of several well known and clever citizens of Winnipeg. It chanced one day, however, that Mr. Barber, being hurried, asked the youthful "local editor," that was myself, to write something for the editorial columns.

"All right," I said; "what will I write?"

"Oh, anything. Write something that will make somebody mad."

"But what about?"

"Write about the election, and take a dig at Davis."

"All right."

I will not inflict that article again on the public; suffice it to say that it duly appeared in all its sublime faultiness. Early next morning subscribers came straggling in, asked what was due on their subscriptions, paid the amount, and ordered the paper discontinued. The article was grandly successful—everybody was mad. Mr. Barber was delighted; his soul was filled with joy. He went out and came in again presently, beaming with smiles. Few people enjoyed a joke so immensly as generous, kind-hearted E. L. Barber, and this was huge. People generally fathered the miserable article on the mayor, no less, Mr. Cornish. Learning their mistake, however, probably from himself, they attributed the authorship to first one and then another of the cleverest and wittiest of Winnipeg's citizens, and finally settled the burden on the shoulders of Mr. Frank Lynn. That gentleman was disgusted, and called at the office to see about it. Said he:

"Barber, who wrote that article on R. A. Davis?"

"Well, the people seem to think it was Mr. Lynn."

"It wasn't though, and I don't see why the d—l they think so; d—n it, its a perfect outrage on my style. Didn't Cornish write it?"

"No; try again."

Mr. Lynn did try again, but without success; for, although denouncing the article as contemptible, he persisted in attributing it to the cleverest men in the city. Finally he left the office, without having his curiosity gratified, and the real criminal escaped undetected.

The local contemporary press took the matter up, and discussed it at length, but finally the feeling engendered calmed down, and our subscribers returned to us.

Now, this article was in every sense, a contemptible production, containing nothing in the world to aggravate any sensible citizen; it was ridiculously weak, and yet what an unexpected result. If the local fame those several accused gentlemen possessed for ability was not sufficient to prevent the attributing to them of so mean a literary effort—why, again I am forced to exclaim, What is fame?

In March of this year, one of those horrible occurrences which occasionally shock communities, transpired at Pembina Mountain, an unsettled district in the south-western part of the province. The previous summer, Mr. Robert Stevenson, a well-to-do farmer from Ontario, had prospected in that neighborhood for land, and finding a suitable location for himself and his three or four grown up sons, had decided there to locate and erect for himself a home in the vast and lonely wilderness.

Leaving his wife and younger children carefully

provided for in Winnipeg, the energetic old man, with two of his elder sons, early in '74, bid farewell to their loved ones, and struck the trail for the new settlement of the Boyne, thence twelve miles across the dreary, trackless, snow-covered prairie to the scene of their future labors.

Arriving at their destination, they occupied a rough, temporary shanty, and with hearty good will immediately commenced the glorious task of taking out building timber, fencing, etc., to build a home where never was civilized home before.

Their shanty was of the description well known to all backwoodsmen, with its rough walls of unhewed logs, and rude though cheerful fire place, sending out its bright warm rays to every nook and corner of the uncouth hut. The fire is never allowed to die out; a great log thrown on at bedtime burns briskly through the long hours of the wintry night and leaves a mass of glowing, glimmering coals, needing only the addition of fresh fuel to again send the bright flames leaping and dancing up the broad chimney to the sharp, frosty air without. In a short time, the rough bark on the inside walls becomes dry as tinder, and a spark is sufficient to ignite a fire that, smouldering for a time, suddenly bursts forth a fierce, roaring flame.

Such was the shanty of the Stevensons, and little they thought that bitterly cold night in March, as they piled the genial fire with fresh fuel ere retiring to their hard couches for the night, what a fearful catastrophe was at hand. Death was at the door, and another dawn would anchor two fresh souls in eternity.

Some hours after retiring, the elder Stevenson awoke in a frenzy. His eyes were blinded with

smoke, the terrible cracking and roaring of fierce flames deafened his ears, and a frightful, horrible agony was eating into his vitals. Like a maniac he rushed half-naked from the doomed hut, out into the winter's night, and for a time his unsettled mind failed to comprehend the fearful situation.

The smouldering ruins of the shanty, and the blackened, charred remains of his boys recalled him, and slowly the old man realized that a dire calamity had befallen. He knew that he, too, was a doomed man; felt the flutter of his anxious soul, and knew that but a thread held it to the pain-racked body, burned beyond hope of recovery. His thoughts flew to his wife and remaining children. Who would bear the ghastly tidings? He was himself the sole occupant of the wilderness, and he must be the messenger—dead or alive, he must reach the settlers on the Boyne, twelve miles distant over a trackless prairie.

With the fiery seeds of death in his heart, and the keen, frosty March wind cutting through and through his unprotected, flame-seared body, the brave old man succeeded in hitching his horses to the sleigh, tumbled himself in, and then, turning their heads to the Boyne, gave the word.

How he ever survived that journey is a mystery, but when the team found their way into the yard of Mr. James Campbell, on the Boyne, Mr. Stevenson was still alive. These kind people used every endeavor to ease the pain of the unfortunate sufferer, and had the satisfaction of seeing him rally sufficiently to allow of his being conveyed to Winnipeg, where alone proper medical attendance could be obtained.

He was beyond the power of medical skill, how-

ever, and after a few weeks of agony, the old man followed his boys to eternity.

Thus perished the pioneers of the Pembina Mountain country, since become the largest settlement of the Province, and one of the most prosperous.

With the opening of navigation this season, a large flow of immigration poured into the prairie Province. The grasshoppers had disappeared from the land, and the outlook for all portions of the community was decidedly bright. In the experience of the native inhabitants, a period of years more or less extended invariably intervened between the visitations of the destructive insects, and consequently farmers looked forward to abundant crops and tradesmen to abundant barter. For the most part the new-comers were delighted with the appearance and prospects of the country, and all through the months of May and June the tide of immigration swelled fuller and stronger. Merchants gathered confidence, and some of the fine brick structures which ornament Main Street at the present time were erected during the summer of '74.

The immigrant sheds on the bank of the Red River, near the confluence of the Assiniboine, were filled to overflowing with active, bustling humanity —men, women and children; and all around were scattered tents, board shanties, etc., each the temporary abode of incoming parties of immigrants, who in their turn, would scatter and give place to others.

Most of the new-comers, this season, came by the Lake Route, *via* Duluth; many chose the all-rail route, *via* Chicago, while a few came by the Canadian Dawson Road. Last year this latter institution was largely patronized, chiefly on account of the low fare, although many traversed it mainly to

view the tremendous scenery along the route from the Nor'-West angle of the Lake of the Woods to Thunder Bay on Lake Superior—scenery sublime in its stupendous grandeur, and well worthy the attention of all lovers of the grand and beautiful in nature.

However, as I have said, but few traveled the Dawson Road this year, mainly on account of the very unsatisfactory manner in which it was conducted. The managers were subsidized by Government to carry passengers through at low fares, and it thus plainly was to their interest to carry no passengers at all, as the less the outlay on unprofitable traffic, the larger the portion of the $60,000 subsidy they would be enabled to put into their own pockets.

At any rate, those who traveled by that much abused route, had hard tales to tell of scarcity of provisions, length of time on the road, lack of proper shelter from the inclemency of the weather, and general mismanagement. The result was that even the low fares would not induce people to travel it, and towards the close of the season the Dawson Road was finally closed, and is now an institution of the past.

Writing of these immigrants and their varied troubles brings to my mind a peculiarity of Manitoba that, to nervous people, is not a source of positive enjoyment—in fact, rather the opposite. I refer to her thunder storms. The summer of '74 abounded in electrical exhibitions, but I fear they were scarcely appreciated. For myself, I am free to confess to a sneaking desire to crawl under the bed when one of these flashing, flaming, dazzling, roaring, tumbling, rattling, crashing demonstrations puts in an appearance; and yet the accidents by light-

ning in this country are not numerous, though probably this may be owing to scarcity of settlement.

I remember one night in June lying awake in bed while a furious, enraged thunder storm came sweeping up from the south. For an hour or so, disjointed flashes of light gave due notice of the approaching battle, and after a time could be heard the boom, boom, of the advance guns.

Joe Cook, the philosopher, was sleeping peacefully at the other side of the room, and I wanted to sleep peacefully too, but couldn't, in the face of this obstreperous thunder storm. I would like to have awakened Joe, so that he might enjoy the electric treat as well as myself; but I forbore, thinking that, just as likely as not, he might prefer to die asleep.

Onward came the grand electric army, and now the van has reached the South Ward and has opened a tremendous cannonade with shot and shell, grape and cannister. The furious elements next storm the city, and in the midst of the infernal din and racket of falling houses and bursting shells, a magazine suddenly exploded directly overhead.

Just then I heard a sharp, piping voice call my name, and cautiously withdrawing my head from under the bedclothes, I peeped out. The room was one fierce glare of yellow sulphurous light, and in the middle of the floor stood Joe, his legs shaking under him and his eyes rolling. He called again.

"What did you 'waken me for?" I asked, snappishly.

"Oh, for Heaven's sake; here's one of the awfullest storms!"

"What do I care; I don't want it."

And pop went my head under the bedclothes again.

For a couple of hours this horrible storm demon continued his vengeful work, shattering and tearing and leveling the young city in the dust. Then the black clouds rolled away, the bright moon shone out mild and beautiful from the clear, calm sky, and I ventured to take a mournful look at the ruins of an enterprising city.

Wonderful! After all the racket, Winnipeg lay before me, unharmed! Well, well; after that experience, who could ever again place any confidence in noise.

In one of the storms of this season, however, a soldier named Cameron was almost instantly killed in a tent near the barracks. He was standing with his hand on the tent pole at the moment of the electric discharge, and the fluid ran down the pole until it reached his hand, when the current separated, one portion continuing to the ground, the other passing along Cameron's arm, thence down his body and legs. At the instant of the shock, the unfortunate man turned to a companion standing in the opening of the tent and said, distinctly:

"I'm struck."

As soon as the words were uttered, he fell back dead; but I have always considered it remarkable that he should speak at all, as the electric charge passed directly along him, running two or three strands of his watch-chain into one, and knocking the heels off his boots.

In July of this year the local papers were filled with an account of the massacre of a half-breed family near St. Joe, Dakota, by Sioux Indians. St. Joe is near the boundary line at the base of Pembina Mountain, among the hills of which the Indians were said to be encamped. But, of course, no one

in Manitoba felt the least alarmed at this isolated instance of crime.

It happened, however, that at the time this news reached Winnipeg, myself and several new-comers had engaged a double wagon to go land prospecting in the neighborhood of the same Pembina Mountain, where on the recommendation of an acquaintance, I had been induced to enter for a homestead and pre-emption a few months previously. I wanted to view my landed property, and the others wanted to find suitable "claims" to locate.

The Indian matter, of course, never entered our heads, so off we started, joyous and happy, with a full supply of canned fruit, biscuits and shot-guns. We traveled to Headingly that night, and camped on the south side of the Assiniboine; at least part of our number did—I didn't; even at this early date, I am pleased to remember, I held good common-sense views on the subject of camping out. There was a house near, and I intended to sleep in that house if possible, two others of the party being of the same mind.

Accordingly we applied for accommodation, and the half-breed owner informed us in English, smashed to atoms with French, that by going to the next house we would find a man who could talk English. I perfectly understood what the man meant, but something tempted me to say:

"Premier maison?"

Now, I did not understand the first thing about French, I had heard those two words used by a friend in reply to an apparently puzzled stranger, and on my inquiring the meaning had been informed they meant "first house." My memory had retained the words, and finding this grand opening for

sliding them in, I had proudly but foolishly done so. My companions looked at me admiringly, and one of them remarked, heartily:

"By George, old fellow, I'm glad you're along; you'll be useful in the French settlements."

I smiled and hurried them away, while the half-breed stood jabbering and grinning till finally a clump of willows hid him from sight.

On repairing to the camp fire next morning, the superior wisdom of myself and companions in sleeping under a roof, manifested itself. Of those who slept in the open air, one had a sore throat, another a sore back, a third did not sleep a wink, and so with the others. In theory, camping out is delightfully wild and romantic; in practice, it is miserably lonesome and dreary. Apart from the raw, vagrant feeling of the night air, sleep is rendered almost impossible by the constant attacks of great clouds of bloodthirsty mosquitoes, eager for human gore and perfectly indifferent to slaughter. Under these conditions life becomes a burden, and even old, established sinners resign the contest in despair, and mentally pray for the coming dawn. Neverthless, it is with feelings of almost unalloyed pleasure that I look back on my varied experiences of camping out; not that I have the slightest desire to pass through the same scenes of misery again, but simply, I presume, because they are past experiences.

While preparations for breakfast were progressing, the chat went round, and in due course the balance of the party were informed of my recently demonstrated powers as a linguist. They were delighted. The individual who voluntarily acted as guide, himself a new-comer, although he had been over the same road once before, nodded kindly, and said:

"Likely enough our grub will be getting low by the time we reach Red River, and as the people are all French from the boundary line to Winnipeg, you'll be of service."

I smiled complacently,—evidently my companions considered me of considerable importance. Presently some one inquired how to say "wagon" in French. This floored me for a moment, but I rallied, and coined a word. Another wanted to know how to say "bread," and I coined again, and so on.

In the midst of this, our French friend of the night before appeared upon the scene. He walked straight to where I was sitting with a large slice of bread on one side and a cup of hot tea on the other, and putting out his hand, said:

"Boshoo."

I handed him the slice of bread.

He took it doubtfully, and rattled off a great long string of (to me) senseless gibberish; then, pausing he appeared to wait for an answer. The eyes of the camp were upon me. I nodded, smiled, took a mouthful of scalding tea that burned a broad track down to my vitals, and hastily moved around to the other side of the camp fire.

The Frenchman followed, and again addressed me, though not so confidently. He paused occasionally, and I nodded. The sweat was oozing out of me, and I dare not look at my companions, though I knew they were looking at me.

Again I moved around the fire, and again that brute of a Frenchman followed. He emphasized now, and gesticulated; he picked up the camp kettle and made motions with his hands, and pointed to a drove of cattle, and made a clown of himself generally. Finally, he paused expectant.

I put my hand in my pocket and handed him a dollar bill.

Immediately a blaze of intelligence lit up his swarthy countenance. He was more than pleased, he was delighted, and quietly taking the note, pointed at the camp kettle and hastened away across the prairie to his house. I felt instantly relieved.

"Say," said the guide, slowly, "what did that Frenchman want?"

"The fact is," I replied, "I didn't understand him exactly myself—these half-breed French always mix so much Indian with their talk; but as well as I could make out, he was very poor and needed money so I gave him a dollar."

"The fact is," repeated the guide, "I don't believe you understand a word of French. Anybody but an idiot would have known that the man was trying to sell you some milk. See, here he comes with it now. You're a fraud."

Sure enough, back came the half-breed with a flowing pail of milk, and set it down at my feet with immense gusto. The unfeeling wretch wanted to talk more; but I didn't, I wanted to go shooting.

About four miles from our camping place, we arrived at the first marsh—a long, narrow stretch of luxuriant grass four or five feet high, that waved and rustled in the wind. When in these marshes, for some cause, I always feel a sort of sinking at the heart or stomach, I don't know which—a feeling as though a crisis was approaching. In mid-summer these marshes generally contain a foot or two of stagnant water, abounding in diminutive shell-fish. This, added to the tall, rank grass, and the fact that the trail is seldom distinct—owing to passing

teams striking off to right and left, leads to a dim sort of fancy that you are traversing the unexplored wilds, and a strong suspicion lurks in your bosom that you may at any moment disappear forever in a slimy quagmire or bottomless lake. I have never yet so disappeared, fortunately for civilization; but, nevertheless, no matter how often I cross a marsh in safety, next time I find myself among the waving grass, I am all eyes and ears for the impending calamity.

Our teamster cautiously invaded the marsh before us; he swerved to one side and kept in the long grass, and for a time we made good progress. Then the wagon wheels cut deeper and deeper, the horses puffed and snorted, and churned the water into a muddy foam, but presently, after a few spasmodic efforts, came to a stand-still, panting and exhausted.

The teamster suggested that some of us had better get out, but his observation was unheard—at least, no one budged.

Again the teamster seized the reins, cracked his whip, and rolled out peal after peal of artistic profanity; the willing horses tugged and jerked, and then, making one grand effort, down they went till their bellies rested on the tough sod. They had "gone through."

The teamster ceased his furious exertions, and leaping out into the foot-deep water, hastened to unhitch his helpless animals. A plunge or two and they regained the tough sod, and stood trembling in the long grass.

I believe that wretched teamster took great consolation from the fact that we were now obliged to get out. He positively grinned, as one after another we solemnly climbed out of the wagon. How

ridiculous; here we had engaged this man to convey us to a certain destination, and just at the very time that conveyance was most needed, we were obliged to make horses, or asses, of ourselves, and haul his old wagon out of the swamp. A few years later on, I had occasion to go from the Boyne to Headingly, and endeavored to engage a seat with the mail-carrier. I asked him if he carried passengers, and he said:

"Yes; occasionally."

"What's the fare?"

"Four dollars."

"Can you take me?"

"Yes, I guess so; but you'll have to walk over the bad places."

"Humph; it's the bad places I don't want to walk over."

"Can't take you, then."

"Well, how much of the road is bad?"

"I reckon, about half or two-thirds."

"Guess I'll walk."

But to return to my narrative. On reaching *terra firma*, our guide informed us that we had two more similar marshes to cross before reaching a stream with the "high" sounding and wonderfully appropriate name of "Stinking River." Once there, he assurred us, our troubles would be at an end, as the marshes beyond, though extensive, had "good bottoms." We met a couple of men from the Boyne, presently, and they confirmed the words of our guide, and supplied us with additional information to turn to the right at the next marsh we came to, and to the left at the third and last. They told us, also, that if we had turned to the left in the one just passed, we would have got through without difficulty.

Following these instructions, we reached Stinking River, twenty-five miles from home, about 11 o'clock, and camped for dinner.

Stinking River is not by any means a lovely stream. I never yet heard of any tourist going into ecstacies over its limpid waters or picturesque scenery. Neither is it in the least degree majestic—by searching carefully you might perhaps find a place a whole rod in width, or even more. It is a shallow stream, with a deep smell, and its waters are thick with green, seed-like atoms of vegetable matter. It takes its rise in a marsh, and consequently contains but little water in a dry season. This remarkable river, however, has a peculiarity all its own: the smell is louder in winter than in summer, and you can accordingly at that season of the year scent it from afar.

Having kindled our camp fire and opened our provision store, we suddenly found ourselves confronted with a serious conundrum: Where would we get water for our tea?

Last night and this morning we had used Assiniboine River water, which, though slightly discolored, is not ill-flavored; but the idea of making tea with the nauseous fluid of Stinking River could not be entertained for a moment. Our guide said we should be thankful to have water at all, but we didn't believe him. Finally he picked up the camp kettle, and walking away a short distance, returned with a gallon or two of clear, pure-looking water, into which he dumped a handful of tea, and placed it on the fire to boil.

Somehow, the tea had a despicable flavor. We all remarked it, but attributed it to the boiling, or to the action, of the strong liquid on the sheet-iron

kettle. There was another, and all sufficient, reason, however. The guide explained it.

After dinner he took a pail and filled it with water at the same hole where he had got the supply for tea. Setting this pail down in front of him, he made the following remarks:

"Boys," said he, "you're mighty particular about drinking water, but you'll have to come down. I've made this trip before, and know how it goes. I've learned to drink any kind of water, and be thankful if it is wet without being poison; and you'll learn, too. You turned up your delicate noses at Stinking River water, so I got you some more to your liking. I strained what you had for dinner through my handkerchief, but here's the article in its natural purity."

Saying which, he upturned the contents of the little pail into the lid of the camp kettle.

Oh, Lord! Our tender stomachs twisted and turned and heaved in sympathy with the twisting, turning and heaving mass of wigglers, grubs and worms in the shallow water. Three or four hideous shell-fish an inch long traversed slowly around, their disgusting, flabby bodies protruding from the shells as they closely hugged the smooth bottom of the kettle lid.

Ugh! the horrible flavor of that tea!

We moved away from the camp-kettle lid, in order to give our stomachs a chance to settle, and getting our pipes, commenced a vigorous, solemn puffing. Indeed, since leaving our camp of last night, the spirits of the entire party had toned down wofully. In my own particular instance, this was easily account for,—that horrid Frenchman, you know; but what shadow had fallen on the others?

Presently, some one suggested that, camping out

wasn't all it was cracked up to be.

That was my opinion, and I said so.

Another remarked that he'd hate to be an Indian and camp out all the time.

Carried unanimously.

The teamster thought anything was good enough for an Indian; and the guide seconded him, adding that an Indian was a treacherous devil, anyhow, and didn't deserve anything better.

I objected, and thought the Indian had some good points.

The guide didn't believe it: as a rule all Indians were sneaks and cowards.

I ventured to think that the Sioux, for instance, possessed a slight degree of bravery.

The teamster didn't see anything brave about massacring a family of defenceless half-breeds.

A pause then, and after a while some one remarked that it was a deuce of a long way to Pembina Mountain.

No one objected.

The guide expected we'd have some trouble getting through the marshes.

I reminded him that we had passed all the bad ones.

Protracted silence.

The guide picked up a chip, stuck it on a stump, and fired at it with his shot-gun.

Except the teamster, we all carried double-barreled shot-guns, and each in turn tried his hand, till the chip was riddled with shot.

Another pause.

The guide raised the hammer of his other barrel, took aim and, zip, a bullet tore a grove in the side of the stump.

I tried next, and sent a great round ball whistling over the prairie.

Then the others followed, for, by some remarkable chance, one barrel of each gun was loaded with ball.

None of us hit the chip.

The teamster stood to one side, whittling a stick with a long vicious looking dirk-knife, and apparently regretting that he had no gun.

Nobody spoke.

The guide again toed the mark, and drawing a little revolver from his breast pocket, rattled off seven shots in quick succession.

I followed with two from the old Derringer.

The rest followed suit, with various styles of pistols and revolvers; but no one hit the chip.

The teamster lifted the lid of the box in front of his wagon, and drawing out a monstrous five-shooter, one of Colt's largest, half-a-yard long, sent the chip flying first shot, and emptied four chambers at a harmless squirrel without success.

We all carefully reloaded our shooting utensils, and gathering up our cups and dishes, prepared to make a fresh start.

Arrived at the ford the teamster stopped his team at the edge of the water.

"That's an ugly crossing," said he.

"Yes," said the guide; "it's changed since I was here before."

"Better get out and see what it's like."

No one seemed anxious, so I jumped out myself and waded across. The water was scarcely knee deep, and the muddy bottom was filled with old logs and brush.

"It's all right, teamster," said I; "the logs in the

bottom won't let the wagon sink."

"It's the logs I'm afraid of," said he, "I don't want to break my horses' legs."

"Well, cross higher up."

"Not much. I ain't going to cross where no body ever crossed before."

"Well, what are you going to do."

"If I put my team in there, I want you fellows to be responsible for accidents."

"All right; I'm willing if the rest are."

The rest, however, objected in the strongest terms. They said they didn't blame the teamster for not wanting to put his horses into such an ugly place; but they wouldn't take the responsibility. He must do it at his own risk, or not at all.

Well, to make a long story short, he didn't do it at all; and the twenty-five mile journey that occupied nearly a day and-a-half, traveling one way, we performed in less than half-a-day, traveling the other.

That night found the party back in Winnipeg again, scalps and all.

The day following our return was a gloomy one for Manitoba. The grasshoppers, in myriads, were hovering over the land. Shade your eyes with your hat or hand, and look towards the rim of the bright noon sun. At first, you see nothing, because you are not looking far enough; but presently, your sight penetrates farther, and you are enabled to distinguish the semblance of a fierce snow storm, high up in the upper currents of the air. Each snow flake is a grasshopper, and the vast, living cloud of countless millions extends for miles in every direction.

There is just a bare possibility that they may pass

over, and anxiously we scan the invading hosts. Towards evening, they settle lower, and the appearance is now of immense quantities of thistle-down floating in the air. The wings of the insects glisten in the sun, and those to whom the sight is new, are slow to believe that the downy atoms sailing back and forth, as though wafted by the circling air currents, are really the much dreaded grasshoppers. But such is the case, clearly demonstrated ere nightfall by immense numbers finding their way to earth.

For a time, Manitoba's young energies were paralized. The visitation was the most extensive ever known, and all portions of the Province suffered alike. Worst of all, myriads of eggs were being deposited by the insects in the rich soil, a dire threat to next year's husbandry.

The effect on immigration manifested itself at once; the outgoing boats carried most passengers, and the bustling life at the immigrant sheds rapidly died out. Of those who remained, undoubtedly numbers did so from pure necessity, and many a father, looking at his little children, cursed the day he came to Manitoba.

The debilitating effect was apparent everywhere—enterprise was shocked and building operations languished. A few days before this, I had sold my house, before referred to, and let the contract for another and better one. I cancelled this contract, and decided to invest my pile—some $1,500—in flour, then selling at $3 per sack. Unfortunately I changed my mind. The following April, when I moved from the city to the farm, flour was selling at $8 per sack, and the supply was so short the Hudson's Bay Company, the only establishment having

flour for sale, considered it a compliment to let any one customer have more than half a sack.

After a few weeks, Winnipeg became hardened to the swarming insects, and once more, as was her wont, looked behind the dark cloud for the silver lining. Faith in the grand future of Manitoba was too firmly implanted in the Winnipeg mind to be destroyed, or even seriously shaken, by a dozen grasshopper visitations. Adversity would pass away, and give place to the glorious dawn of prosperity.

I have now another deplorable incident to relate. One morning in August the people of Winnipeg were thrown into a state of intense excitement. A brutal murder had been committed in their midst. In the early morning, the victim, horribly slashed and cut, had been found on the Portage Road.

Calling at the temporary dead-house to learn particulars, I was terribly shocked to see before me all that was mortal of the harmless, inoffensive J. A. Brown, the young man to whom I have had occasion to refer several times during this narrative. He was stabbed in no less than sixteen places, and his clothes were covered with blood. The horrible sight filled my mind for weeks.

Two disreputable volunteers, Michand and Baker, were suspected, and the police went to the barracks and made the arrests. Baker had a cut on his hand, and Michand's clothes showed traces of blood.

Everybody liked poor Brown, and the wildest excitement prevailed as the police marched to the jail with their prisoners. A crowd of men followed close up behind, and one of Winnipeg's "merchant princes," yelled out:

"Hang the villains! Hang the villains! I'll supply the rope!"

The prisoners were terrified, and with every reason, for there was danger in the angry mob. Happily this feeling of lawlessness was but transient. Lynch-law is an institution that finds but little favor in the Canadian North-West,—Manitoba's inhabitants are pre-eminently law-abiding.

It so happened, that the Court of Queen's Bench was in session at the time of this foul deed, and consequently the prisoners were almost immediately brought up for trial. The evidence went to show that Baker and Michand had quarreled while drunk. Michand attacked Baker with a large sheath knife, and cut the latter severely on the hand. At this point, the unfortunate Brown interfered. He had been walking a few yards ahead of the wrangling men, and hearing high words had turned to ask the cause of the trouble. Michand turned from Baker, who immediately fled to the barracks, and advanced on the unoffending stranger, whom he attacked with horrible ferocity.

Brown died on the spot, and then his body was discovered in the morning.

Baker was acquitted, and Michand confessed his guilt. A few months later this vile criminal suffered the extreme penalty of the law, being the first case of capital punishment in the new Province of Manitoba.

During the month of August in this year, malignant fever of a terribly fatal character, became epidemic and raged with unabated fury until finally subdued by the cold weather of October and November. For about two months the death rate was something fearful for so small a place,—men, wo-

men and children, all suffered alike; but it was observable that the disease prevailed to a much greater extent among those newly arrived. Of those attacked, an unusually large percentage succumbed to the fatal malady, and during its progress an intense panic prevailed.

The medical men of Winnipeg call this disease typhoid fever but I have always been of the opinion (possibly one so utterly unlearned in medicine as myself should not have an opinion) that they did not properly understand the malady. I say this with all due respect to Winnipeg's medical fraternity, whom I believe to be reasonably learned in their profession; but new diseases are constantly transpiring which need to be treated awhile before being perfectly understood. I am not the only one who remarked that the doctors appeared to be at fault, and that their treatment seemed purely experimental. The terrible per centage of deaths bears out this opinion.

Eight or nine years ago I resided in a town of Pennsylvania about the size of Winnipeg, at the time of the small-pox epidemic in that State. The horrible scourge passed through this town, and the inhabitants were panic-stricken. Nevertheless there were only some ten or eleven cases of small-pox, and just three deaths. This was a mere nothing compared with the fever epidemic in Winnipeg.

Again, in this same Pennsylvania town, I first learned of a remarkably fatal disease called spotted fever, accompained by a spinal affection, which carried off its victims in short order, and was said to baffle the skill of all medical practitioners. Hemlock tea was claimed to be the only known remedy, and even it was acknowledged to be more or less a

failure. In view of this advancing fever night-mare, I departed from Pennsylvania, never to return.

Afterwards, in Winnipeg, observing the doctors apparently place full confidence in the well-known fever specific, quinine, with calamitous results, I could hardly restrain an audacious desire to request them to try hemlock tea; for, somehow, in its action this Winnipeg fever appeared to bear a great resemblance to the spotted fever of Pennsylvania, more especially in the matter of the spinal affection —*cerebro spinal menengitis*, or, as the philosophical Joe Cook called it, *cerebro spinal come-and-get-us.*

I fancy that, owing to the large area of marsh land, the Prairie Province is more or less liable to this fever, though, doubtless, very seldom in an epidemic character. Certainly a few cases invariably occur towards the close of the warm weather each season.

I hope the doctors of Winnipeg will receive these remarks kindly, not the slightest reflection being intended on their professional skill. If, however, they insist that the disease is the well-known typhoid fever, I shall be bound to believe them; but, at the same time, I shall be bound to believe that the medical faculty have not reached any great preeminence in their calling, when, after so lengthy an experience of a somewhat common disease, they prove themselves altogether unable to cope with it.

The closing event of '74 was the Provincial elections, which were held in December. I had intended to go into this matter at some length, but as I am neither writing a history nor a political review, it is needless for me to do so. Suffice it to say that a majority of the representatives returned supported Mr. Davis' Ministry, which was thus established

for a term of four years. Mr. Davis, Premier and Provincial Treasurer, with his wonderful tact, and by slightly changing his policy, succeeded in drawing over nearly all the Opposition members, before the close of the first session, and Mr. Cornish, leader of the Opposition, who had to go to the outlying constituencies for a seat, was left with a feeble following of four. The abolition of the Upper Chamber of the Legislature, was the important object to be gained by thus uniting the opposing factions in the House, and thanks to Mr. Davis, the measure was finally carried, in the very teeth of a couple of exceedingly unpatriotic Legislative Councillors.

At the close of the year were also held the civic elections; and strange as it may appear, Mr. Cornish, the clever, was overwhelmingly beaten in the contest for the mayoralty, by Mr. W. N. Kennedy, a gentleman of few words and almost unknown to the bulk of the people.

I just mention this as an indication of the utter fickleness of the Winnipeg electorate, for really, Mr. Cornish was just as deserving of the good-will of the public in '74 as he was in '73.

As I shall not again refer to political matters in these pages, I will briefly carry down to date the history of the two political opponents to whom I have referred. Mr. Davis successfully administered the public affairs of the province for five years in in all. His policy was one of strict economy, and under no consideration would he allow the expenditure to overrun the revenue. This was in exact accord with the desire of the electorate, as expressed by the elections of '74. Nevertheless, the free and independent electors, finding that the Government readily met their views, and by careful

economizing, were enabled to make both ends met, gradually arrived at the conclusion that there must be something wrong; if they couldn't see the spectre, all the more reason for believing it must be there. This is a peculiarity of free and independent electors. The Hon. Premier, knowing this, wisely concluded to retire from a thankless office, and having done so, the intelligent public readily and gladly tendered to Mr. Davis that meed of praise which they denied the Premier and Provincial Treasurer.

Mr. Cornish, undaunted by the overwhelming majority of the Ministerialists, continued in weak opposition. The courage he displayed in attacking every and all measures introduced by the Government, regardless of consequences, raised him rapidly in the public esteem, and there is little doubt that, had he lived to participate in another election campaign, the verdict passed upon him four years before would have been reversed. In November, 1878, Francis Evans Cornish was gathered to his fathers.

I will now close this chapter, and with it my sketch of two years' residence in Winnipeg.

CHAPTER V.

SOME REMARKS ON HOMESTEAD MATTERS—EXIT WINNIPEG.

When I first took up my "claim" at Pembina Mountain in the spring of '74, I had no *definite* intention of becoming an actual settler. I put that word "definite" in there advisedly, because, having duly subscribed to the oath required of all applicants for homesteads, I feel that some such word is really desirable in that particular place. Of course, hundreds of others subscribed to this same oath under precisely similar circumstances; and I could even mention a dozen or so of good citizens and worthy church members who so subscribed though possessed of a definite intention exactly opposite. However, I am not a church member, and therefore I must be a little circumspect. The oath is as follows:

"I, ————————, do solemnly swear that I am over eighteen years of age, that I have not previously obtained a homestead under the provisions of the Dominion Lands Act, that the land in question belongs to the class open for homestead entry; that there is no person residing or having improvements thereon, and that the application is made for my exclusive use and benefit, *with intention to reside upon and cultivate the said land.* So help me God."

The Italics are mine. Any one, by taking this

oath, and paying a fee of ten dollars, is entitled to a homestead entry for one hundred and sixty acres, and a pre-emption right to one hundred and sixty acres adjoining. At any time, after a period of three years from the date of entry, the homesteader may claim a patent from the crown for the homestead without additional charge, and a patent for the pre-emption on payment of one dollar per acre, provided he fulfils the requirements of the law in regard to settlement. If he does not perform such duties, he cannot, of course, claim a patent, and moreover, his entry is liable to be cancelled if he neglects to make some little improvements within six months from date of entry.

However, at the time of which I write, if the homesteader went out and looked at his claim, that was considered sufficient improvements for a year or two; if he was lazy he might engage someone else to look at it for him; or, as a last resort, he could *talk* of going out to look at it. Under these remarkably liberal conditions, almost every citizen of Winnipeg adventured ten dollars in a three-hundred-and-twenty-acre "claim" in the outlying settlements. In the course of a year or two, these claims would become comparatively valuable, and would then be disposed of to immigrants and others "cheap for cash."

In framing the Lands Act, the Dominion Government evidently took this matter into consideration, and endeavored to prevent such speculation, by providing that homesteaders should have no transferable right in any homestead until the issue of the patent. A homesteader, however, was permitted to abandon a first claim and enter for a second, and thus full sweep was allowed for the very evil to be

guarded against; claims were not sold, but for a certain consideration they were abandoned, and as the first applicant thereafter had an indisputable right to enter for these vacant claims, the process worked like a charm, and the vendor had the *legal* right of entering for a second homestead. I know men who have had no less than four homesteads, but of course they perjured themselves legally as well as morally.

As the land regulations expressly stated that the right to any disputed claim, should vest in the individual who made first improvements, it once in a while transpired that some grasping wretch of a farmer from the east, intent on settlement, and desirous of securing a favorable location, would allow his covetous eye to wander over the goodly acres of the Winnipeg homesteader, till, his ideas of justice becoming perverted, he came to believe that the fact of so many homesteads lying vacant acted as a drawback on the country's progress, and in accordance with this view, would promptly enter into possession of the said goodly acres, without consulting the Winnipeg man at all; and in the course of time, the entry of the enterprising non-resident would be cancelled and transferred to the plodding actual settler.

This operation is called "jumping," and it always makes the homestead speculator feel bad to have his claim jumped.

Of late years the regulations relating to homesteads are much more stringently enforced than formerly, though speculation still continues to a certain limited extent.

Having thus "sat down" on the homestead speculating business, I will now return to the proposition with which this chapter opened, viz: that

at the time I took up my claim, I had no definite intention of becoming an actual settler.

I have before remarked that, notwithstanding adverse circumstances, the people of Manitoba possessed unwavering faith in the ultimate great future of their Province. In this belief, I, of course, shared. It was to be an an agricultural future, for which alone we possessed peculiar advantages. We might, perhaps, manufacture woollens and leather to a limited extent; but wheat was the great stand-by—wheat was to bring us wealth. These views being extensively held, the natural result followed: the mass of the people turned their attention to agriculture, and of the farmers of Manitoba an unusually large proportion are professional men, tradesmen, mechanics, etc. Farming is the trade of the country, and accordingly in that occupation will be found thousands of successful tillers of the soil, who turned their first furrow on the Manitoban prairies.

For myself, the desire to become a horny-handed farmer never entered my head until I became possessed of the claim at Pembina Mountain aforesaid. Thenceforth, I rejoiced no more at "fat-takes" or "pick-ups." It was no pleasure to report a meeting by stealing the *Free Press* report, and changing the top and bottom line. These things had all lost their interest; I wanted to be a farmer. I didn't know anything about farming, but this was a small matter that time would speedily remedy. Having arrived at this conclusion, I felt eased immediately, and managed to exist until the following spring.

Now, Mr. Reader, if you had been standing on the Portage Road about half a mile from Winnipeg, at three o'clock in the afternoon of April 1st, 1875, you might have observed a wagon laden with lum-

ber, plow, sheet-iron stove, and other articles, and drawn by a yoke of unusually large oxen. At first you might be puzzled to know whether the oxen were drawing the wagon, or the wagon drawing the exen; but by getting in line with a fence or telegraph pole, you would observe a tendency on the part of the oxen and wagon to take ground to the west, and as the oxen were headed in that direction, you would naturally, and correctly conclude that the oxen were drawing the wagon.

This point being settled, you would now have time to observe a young man with a very red face, sitting on the wagon and devoting his whole energy to swinging a long whip, and vociferating hoarsely, "Gee-haw, whoa-haw, back-haw." Following up behind the wagon, you might also observe a very large brimmed hat and a very large pair of boots. There is a young man located in the boots, but you probably hardly notice that fact at first.

Having made these observations, Mr. Reader, you may return to the city; I have no further need of you at present. If you had been a "fair reader," or even a "gentle reader," I would probably not have treated you so summarily. The oxen and wagon you saw, are my oxen and wagon; the red-faced young man, is "Joe," a relative of mine, whom I have engaged to "run" my farm for a year; the boots are my boots, and I accompany them in capacity of guide. Depart.

CHAPTER VI.

VALUABLE RECEIPT — ENCOURAGEMENT — MANSION HOUSE—A STRANGE BLUFF—NARROW ESCAPE—CAMPING OUT—PHENOMENON—THE BOYNE—MY CLAIM—PRAIRIE FIRE—DRIVING OXEN—BED.

The distance from Winnipeg to Pembina Mountain is about sixty-five miles, but owing to the absence of houses it is a rather awkard trip to make with oxen—particularly slow oxen. I had already discovered that some oxen were slower than others; but even yet, I can hardly say whether there are some faster than others—that is, to travel; I know well enough there are to stand still.

From Winnipeg to Headingly the distance is twelve miles; from Headingly to Stinking River, twelve miles without a house; Stinking River to the Boyne, thirty miles without a house; Boyne to Pembina Mountain, fifteen miles.

Joe and I traveled to Sturgeon Creek, seven miles, the first afternoon, in order to have an easy day to Stinking River, so that our cattle would be comparatively fresh for the thirty mile trip the following day. We had beautiful weather the first two days, but the roads as far as Headingly were vile. I walked as far as Stinking River, for two reasons, first, because I purchased my boots expressly for walking through mud and water; secondly, because

I felt satisfied that the oxen were already overloaded, and that any additional burden would bring us to a full stop. Joe constantly assured me that my weight would not make the slightest difference, that we did not have on more than five or six hundred, and that the oxen were easily good for a ton; but one glance at the laboring cattle convinced me that an additional pound would be dangerous, and therefore I walked.

In Winnipeg, I used often to be troubled with wakefulness at night,—sometimes I'd toss and tumble till near morning before going to sleep. I have now a receipt for this trouble, which I here give free of charge: A pair of the heaviest kind of heavy boots, and a seven mile walk through mud a foot deep. This receipt is infallible. It was discovered on the 1st of April, 1875, between Winnipeg and Sturgeon Creek, Manitoba. No doubt it might be patented, and a fortune realized; but being somewhat of a philantrophist, I prefer to publish it for the good of suffering humanity, without money and without price.

We stopped at the Sturgeon Creek hotel that first night, and having instructed the landlord to call us early, immediately retired. There was no fooling about going to sleep this time; it was solid business. As near as I could guess I had been sleeping about two minutes and-a-half, when a frightful thunder storm broke out; a band of Sioux Indians, yelling like fiends, stormed the hotel; a menagerie of wild beasts broke loose on the roof, and a brass band performed a serenade round the bed, the fellow with the cymbals standing close to my head and breaking my system into small fragments every time he brought them together.

Under these conditions I awoke in a terrible state of excitement. The horrible noise had ceased, and Joe was lighting the lamp as calm and solemn as an oyster. No Indians, no thunder storm, no brass band. Said I:

"For heaven's sake, Joe, what's the matter?"

"Matter," said he; "time to get up, that's what's the matter."

"But what made that unearthly racket?"

"There was no particular racket. Guess you've been dreaming—you look scared. Landlord knocked at the door and called out that it was five o'clock."

"And what did he do that for?"

"Because we told him to, last night."

"Last night, fiddlesticks! You don't believe it's five o'clock, do you?"

"Of course I do."

"Well, I don't—he lied. I'll stay here till morning."

"But it's morning now, I tell you."

"No, it isn't."

"Yes, it is."

"Kawin."

"Look there then, you mule," and Joe stuck his watch up in my face; time, 5:30.

"She's stopped," said I.

"Listen," said Joe.

I listened, and being satisfied, slowly crawled out of bed, weary and exhausted; but an idea occurred to me presently, from which I derived immense comfort. Here is the idea: When I returned from this trip I would go to bed and sleep two weeks.

By this time Joe was putting on his boots and grimacing most horribly. I saw him glance at my

big fellows occasionally, and I knew he was envious. Said I:

"Joe, I warned you against those boots, and advised you to get a pair of heavier ones; but you wouldn't, and I guess you wish you had now. These are the boots for walking in."

Saying which, I picked up one of mine and stuck my foot down the leg of it.

Now, these boots were not altogether large—the leg was almost gigantic, but the important part, the foot, fitted me nicely, and when in these boots I felt a little vain, because my foot looked so neat at the bottom of such huge legs, that I was persuaded it was a small foot and a pretty foot, even though I generally wore No. 10.

Well, as I said, I stuck my foot into the leg of the boot, and gently drew it up over my knee; then I put a finger in each strap to finish the operation. Somehow my foot stuck solid at the instep, and refused to go further. I therefore pulled it off again, and ran down my hand to discover the difficulty. However, there didn't appear to be any difficulty. I took a fresh start, and dropping my foot down, as far as the instep, gave a tremendous pull. The impression left on my mind after this pull, was similar to that experienced by the man who endeavored to put his pants on over his head.

After a heavy tussle and much frantic exertion, Joe had finally triumphed over his boots, and was now watching my contortions with intense interest, occasionally offering suggestions and criticisms which I did not appreciate. He said the walking had swelled my feet and the snow water had caused my boots to shrink, until there was a difference of at least two hundred per cent. between the feet and

the boots, and that therefore I could not get them on unless I cut a slit down the instep. But that was too severe a remedy; I wouldn't accept of it.

The next half-hour I will not discuss—the history thereof is too terrible to be perused by a Christian community. Joe says the room was encircled and decorated with broad belts of variegated profanity; but, for my part I never believed him.

As we step into the dining-room to breakfast, I fully realize that my head is a good three inches higher than ordinarily; but this is not the result of conscious victory—it is the result of compromise, for my heels have usurped the position in my boots properly belonging to my ankles.

Well, we are *en route* once more, and gradually my feet have worked down, until I can walk along quite comfortable, though I notice a slight tendency to travel on my ankles. Before reaching Headingly, this tendency has resulted in a large sore spot on the outside of each ankle, and walking becomes painful, though I grin and bear it.

At Headingly, we stopped for dinner. There were some settlers from the Boyne here, and we asked them concerning the roads. One of them said we could never cross the Assiniboine on account of the ice. Another said that if we did get across, we couldn't go any further, because the snow was all gone as far as Stinking River. I told him we had a wagon. Then another said we might go to Stinking River all right with a wagon, but the snow was deep across the Big Plain and there was no use of our attempting it without a sleigh.

Joe was discouraged, and I was flattened right out. However we concluded to make an endeavor, and behold the first difficulty vanished from before

us like mist before the sun. The track across the Assiniboine wasn't a bit slippery; in fact, it was the best piece of road we encountered during the whole trip. As we traveled further and failed to discover any difficulty to bar the way, we concluded that those Boyne men, for some hidden reason, wanted us to return to Winnipeg; and therefore, between ourselves, we denounced those Boyne men in round terms, and showed up their vile selfishness in a manner not the least flattering.

However, with the experience of added years, I can now clear those unfortunate men of all such charges. Like all new settlers, they were undoubtedly highly pleased to have others go and settle in their neighborhood; and like the generality of settlers, they manifested their pleasure by assuring all such that the difficulties ahead were invincible, and that it would be vastly safer and wiser not to attempt further progress.

About three o'clock we arrived on the banks of the sweet-savored Stinking River, which I have already briefly described. Turning to the right, near the ford, we put up at the house of Sandy Murray, who pretended to keep a sort of stopping place for travelers. There were very few settlers on Stinking River, the land for eight or ten miles on either side having been reserved by Government for the children of half-breed heads of families. Mr. Murray had located prior to the setting apart of the reserve, and the fact of the latter temporarily prohibited further settlement.

As I had insisted on walking all day, under the impression that the oxen had load enough, by the time we reached Stinking River I was in that condition of bodily fatigue when the one great desire of

life is to lie down somewhere and stay. I wasn't used to such violent physical exercise, and I wasn't used to such boots—such vile, monstrous boots, my pride and delight though they were only yesterday morning. If I paused for a moment, every joint in my body settled stiff and solid, and it required great moral courage to unlimber again; and as for my feet—well, I didn't know for sure that I had any feet, nothing but a lump of agony at the bottom of each leg.

On arrival at Murray's, Joe put the oxen in the stable and I entered the house. I shall ever remember that house with feelings of gratitude and affection—not because it was a particularly good house, but because it really was a house, and had a roof on it, and contained limited supplies of provisions, and a large box-stove, and chairs to sit down on, and, lastly, because it marked the end of our day's journey. These several items united, formd a condition of things bordering closely on paradise.

I pulled my boots off first thing, and finding that, in the main, my feet were still left to me, I bathed them in hot water, after which I sat down on two or three chairs, and for a time resigned myself to a state of ecstatic bliss.

After supper I revived somewhat, and took in my surroundings. It was a remarkably comfortable house built of logs, neatly put together and well plastered. I noticed that it wasn't a very large building, but to my mind it was sufficiently large and roomy for genuine comfort and convenience. The more I pondered the matter, sitting on two chairs, with my feet turned to the big box-stove, the more I felt convinced that it was in every way a most desirable country residence, and finally I ven-

tured to congratulate Mr. Murray on the possession of such a snug domicile. He looked at me hard for a moment or two, then he turned away and said:

"Oh, it's good enough for the present."

I didn't understand this man's lack of appreciation for a long time. Stopping there, ten days afterwards, on my return trip, I was still puzzling over it. But the next time I came along, some weeks later, with spirits high, and a horse and buggy to carry me, the puzzle was solved: the house was nothing but a little one-story log shanty, plastered with mud and thatched with grass.

As neither Joe nor I had any acquaintance with the road from here to the Boyne, we made it a point to gain as much information from Murray as possible. We learned that the distance was thirty miles, that there was no house between, that there was no timber, that there was one trail only until within a few miles of the Boyne, where it branched off to the houses of the various settlers, and lastly we learned that in order to reach the Boyne before dark we must start before daylight, unless our cattle were unusually good travelers.

I said I thought it was a pretty hard trip for cattle, and Murray said:

"Yes, it's hard; but it can't be helped. It's not so bad now, though, for if you do happen to lose the track, you can camp until morning without any danger; but when a man starts on that road in winter he must go through or perish."

Murray agreed to give us an early start and Joe and I retired. It was daylight when I awakened—or rather when Joe succeeded in arousing me.

"Wake up," said he, "wake up. Breakfast's ready!"

"Dash breakfast."

"If we don't make a start soon we'll not get to the Boyne to-night."

"Dash the Boyne."

However, the situation forced itself upon me and I aroused myself. Joe remarked on my miserable appearance.

"Yes, Joe," said I, "I am miserable. I'm tired, and I'm sore, and I'm sleepy. I told you yesterday morning that when I got home again I'd sleep two weeks; but now I intend to sleep three weeks."

Joe had been up for some time and had attended to the oxen. I asked him how he got along with his boots this morning. He said:

"Pretty tough."

"Worse than yesterday morning?"

"You bet."

"I'm afraid of mine."

"Shouldn't wonder. You ought to have got light ones like mine."

"Did the grease help them?"

"Helped mine a good deal. Yours are pretty hard yet."

"I won't put them on till we're ready to start."

"All right."

After breakfast, Joe went to yoke up, and I prepared for a conflict with the boots. It was soon over, the first skirmish satisfied me that I had undertaken a hopeless task, and I sorrowfully resigned the contest. To cut the boots would have availed but little, as my feet were swelled out of all proportion.

I tried to procure a pair of moccasins or something, from Murray, but he had nothing to offer, and consequently I was obliged to ride even

though the oxen did suffer.

As the weather had turned cold, I got out all our bedding, and fixed myself quite comfortably, and after a mile or two I rather liked sore feet. To be sure the oxen were struggling painfully, but apparently they continued to gradually move along, and therefore I had good hopes that they would wiggle through.

About the middle of the forenoon we came in sight of a small bluff of timber, apparently close alongside the trail. I looked over my shoulder and observed that we had not made more than five or six miles from the timber on Stinking River. I held my peace for a time, but finally I could contain myself no longer. Said I:

"Joe, didn't Murray say there wasn't a stick of timber till within a few miles of the Boyne?"

"Yes, and I've heard others say the same thing dozens of times."

"Well, I'm sure that's a little bluff of timber about three or four miles ahead."

"I think it is, too; but it's farther away than you think—five or six miles anyhow."

"We must have got off the right trail someway. Evidently this trail leads straight to that timber. What direction do you think we are traveling?"

"I don't know, now; but I did think we were traveling south-west."

"So did I; but that timber has ruined my calculations entirely. I wish we could get a glimpse of the sun for a moment."

"Not much chance of that to-day. More likely to have a snow-storm before night."

"Who-o-a."

The oxen stop, and Joe and I stand up in the

every time he took a step I could see vast stretches of sky and prairie through the opening betwixt his legs. He was at least a hundred feet high, and swung his arms around like the long branches of some mighty forest tree in a hurricane.

I gave a gasp or two, preparatory to giving up the ghost, but fortunately recalled the episode of the bluff of timber. This saved me. I concluded to wait a few minutes, and behold the monster gradually diminished, till presently a mild-voiced, grey-haired old man advanced and bid me good day. I was bigger than he; but, fortunately for the old fellow, I was taught at Sunday School to respect grey hairs.

At noon Joe and I camped for dinner. We hadn't the slightest idea of the distance we had traveled, nor the direction. We could see the semblance of timber all around us, but we knew that as we advanced, the seeming timber would resolve into clumps of willow. Fortunately the encouragement tendered us by the Boyne men in regard to the road, proved illusive. There certainly was a little snow, but not sufficient to retard our progress. One thing in regard to the snow puzzled me considerably: where was it gone. I asked Joe, and he laughed.

"Why, melted," said he, "of course. All gone into water."

"Is it?"

"Of course it is."

"Well, where's the water?"

Joe gave it up, and so did I. Every spring, the snow melts away under the influence of bright, warm sunshine, and according as the snow melts off, the land dries. Apparently the water has all passed

away. But when the great mass of snow has disappeared, and none is left save in the woods and here and there the remains of some huge drift, you go out some morning and find every ravine a rushing torrent and every depression a miniature lake. Where was that water in the meantime? that's the conundrum Joe and I had to give up.

When Joe got the kettle boiled and the tea made, I jumped down off the wagon. I was weary of riding; the oxen traveled so wonderfully slow, that I felt a change of some kind was absolutely necessary. Other days, when I walked myself, I thought the poor animals got along as fast as could be expected; but riding along on the wagon, feeling quite comfortable, I wondered the old brutes weren't ashamed of their slow motion. During the forenoon, I made up my mind that when we stopped at noon, I would make another endeavor to put on my boots, and if I succeeded I could walk or ride as I felt inclined.

After lunch, our spirits rose wonderfully. Joe thought the weather looked like clearing up, and I thought I could put on those boots easily. The weather didn't clear up, but I did put on the boots, and without great difficulty either. The swelling in my feet had all gone down, and during the rest of the trip my boots troubled me but little, though, being badly over-run; their beauty was gone for ever.

On again over the same old monotonous style of road. About five o'clock we were at the foot of a rise of land topped with a bluff of timber. We had been similarly placed twenty times to-day; but somehow this time the rise of land and the bluff of timber had an honest, business-like appearance that stamped them as genuine—at least, would have earlier

in the day. As it was, we permitted a glimmer or two of hope to inspire us, but kept our convictions well in hand.

For a while we didn't appear to get any nearer to the bluff of timber, or whatever it might be, but, presently, like all the others, it gradually sank lower and lower—willows again, evidently. Oh, such a weary, weary road. For the first time I wished myself back in Winnipeg sticking type. I had enough farming out in the country. I began to think that the young men from Ontario who wanted farms inside the city corporation were pretty level-headed, after all. I used to despise them; but I didn't now. They probably knew what they were about. A farm butting on Main Street or the Market Square, I could see clearly enough, had several important advantages over one out in the country. I knew it would be rather difficult to get a farm anywhere near the centre of the city; but if I couldn't get one, I could do as these young men did—go back to Ontario in disgust.

While these matters are passing through my mind, we have slowly advanced, and now I become aware that the bluff has disappeared entirely. I consider this circumstance, turn it over three or four times, and then a whole flood of conviction rushes in and warms up my soul.

"Joe," said I, "thank heaven we'll now reach the top of that long hill we commenced at the bottom of this morning."

"How do you know?"

"I know because the bluff has disappeared. There must be a hill between here and that bluff, or we would see it yet. There is no telling what an hour may bring forth."

"I hope it may bring forth shelter for ourselves and cattle. It will be dark in less than two hours, and I'm afraid it will be an ugly night."

"Wait till we get to the top of the hill."

In less than hour, we again came in sight of the bluff of timber—just the top at first, but gradually the trunks of the trees became visible, and presently we found ourselves at the top of the hill. It was only a rise of land, and the level prairie still lay before us.

Looking back we could see for miles over the broad plain, a lonely dreary expanse. Ahead, our view was shut in by clumps of tall willows and little poplar bluffs, but over and beyond these we could distinguish the dark line of heavy oak timber on the Boyne, seven miles away. Half a mile to the right, was the bluff of poplars that had cheered us a few miles back, looking so honest and friendly after the many delusions we had experienced, that I felt almost tempted to drive up and camp for the night, now rapidly closing in. However, after a consultation, we concluded we had better make the Boyne if possible, and soon our little bluff disappeared in the rear.

At dusk, I was fortunate enough to stumble across a survey post, and with the aid of a match succeeded in deciphering the figures. By a simple calculation, I was thus enabled to learn our whereabouts, and the distance from the Boyne—nearly five miles. I dare say I could explain the extremely simple though unsurpassed survey system of this country if I tried, and the information might prove useful; but if I try to crowd too much information into this narrative I run a great risk of being considered a bore, and I am not ambitious in that

line, the more so as numerous other writers on Manitoba already occupy first places.

The night set in, dark, cold and stormy. Two or three times we got off the trail, but managed to find it again. At last we concluded to camp till morning. We were in danger of finally losing the trail at any time, and there was no telling where we might wander to during the night. Better to stay where we were, and get through the night the best way we could; at the first peep of day in the morning we would be all ready to continue our journey.

Joe unyoked the oxen, and I took down our sheet-iron stove. Then we took some of our lumber, and leaned it up against the wagon to shelter us from the cold, raw wind. We might have made ourselves quite comfortable if we had only had sense enough; but we didn't. Although, perhaps, after all, it was experience we lacked. We were cold and miserable—too miserable to make any effort to improve our condition. I filled the stove full of wood, and touched a match to it. It flared a moment and went out, and I felt too indifferent to light it again. This seems ridiculous, and we suffering with the cold, but it's a fact all the same.

Joe got down a bag containing bread and Balogna sausage. We ate all we could, but didn't recover our spirits. At noon, we felt wonderfully better after lunch; but there was no such improvement now.

I didn't know the reason then, though, I soon learned it. It was the dispensing with tea—nothing like strong, hot tea for camping out. If we had drunk a gallon or so of tea, we would have felt like different individuals, and would have taken pains to make ourselves comfortable for the night. But we

did neither the one nor the other and consequently passed a miserable, miserable night.

Looking over the last paragraph it occurs to me that possibly I may be considered extravagant, speaking of drinking tea by the gallon, but really that is the proper way to put it. Drinking tea at a camp fire out on the prairie, is a different matter altogether from drinking tea at home, and plenty of people who have no particular appetite for tea in the latter case, are regular swills in the former. A quart is sufficient for me at any time; but there are very few of my neighbors who would not dispose of a gallon each meal camping out; and I know at least one of the old pioneers who had no difficulty in getting away with a gallon and a half, that being the full capacity of his camp kettle.

Utterly dejected, Joe and I crawled under the wagon and disposed ourselves for sleep. We didn't make the least endeavor to spread our bedding to the best advantage, but threw down our blankets, and one way or another mixed ourselves through them.

Shortly after dark, it commenced to sleet and snow, and the cold wind whirled the fine particles through the cracks of our temporary shelter, and enveloped us in a thin coating of dreary white. Fortunately, the weather soon improved somewhat. The snow and sleet ceased, though the wind continued violent until near morning.

After hours and hours of silent misery, I began to wonder how the night was passing. Was it early in the night, or early in the morning? It seemed ages ago since we had stopped to camp, but I dared not venture to hope that the night was far spent. Joe carried a watch, but I dreaded to ask the time.

After another weary spell, I could bear it no longer. I would know the worst if it extinguished me.

"Joe."

"Well."

"Have you been asleep?"

"No. Have you?"

"No. What time is it?"

After three or four unsuccessful endeavors to light a match, Joe finally succeeded.

"Twenty minutes past twelve."

"Not so bad," said I, with a great sigh of relief. "I was afraid it wasn't more than nine o'clock."

"It's a long time time till daylight yet, though," said Joe. "Are you cold?"

"Most horrible. Are you?"

"Numb."

"I've got enough farming."

"What will you do?"

"Don't know—I'm too cold. Wait till we get to the Boyne and get warmed."

Another long, dreary silence. Was it near morning? It must be, surely—four o'clock, anyhow.

"Joe."

"Well."

"Have you been asleep?"

"No; too cold. Have you?"

"No. Don't you think it's near morning?"

"Don't know—too miserable."

"Look and see."

"Strike a match, then."

I struck a match, and Joe opened his watch: Half-past two.

I groaned, and lay down again. Would daylight never come? After a while the wind calmed down,

and a star here and there beamed out brightly through rifts in the clouds. The weather had moderated, and I commenced to feel the least bit sleepy. It must be near five o'clock, though, and I had better not fall asleep.

"Joe."

"Well."

"Have you been asleep?"

"No; but I'm getting sleepy."

"So am I,—the weather has turned warmer. It must be near daylight.

"I guess so. I'll look."

Joe lighted a match, and opened his watch. Quarter past three. I gasped. Joe lifted the watch to his ear—

"She's stopped. I forgot to wind her up last night."

"Thank heaven! Better not fall asleep, Joe; I'm sure it will soon be daylight."

"All right."

I don't know how long I lay awake, but finally I dropped off into a sound sleep. I awoke with a start. Joe was snoring loudly, and the broad glare of day flashed in my eyes and confused me. The air seemed to have a feeling of lateness about it, and I fancied it must be near noon. I jumped up and looked out. Good heavens! the sun was just sinking in the west,—a great, red orb. I crawled under the wagon and shook Joe roughly by the shoulder.

"Joe, Joe, we've been sleeping all day. Hurry and hitch up the cattle, or we'll have to stay here another night."

Joe crawled out, rubbing his eyes. He gazed around a moment or two before he understood the situation.

"Hurry up, Joe," said I.

"I'll be ready in a minute," said he; "but I can't get that sun business through me properly. I'd swear he's setting in the north."

"Bosh. You're turned around. Never fear but that's the west all right."

"Well, I suppose it must be; but I tell you, I feel badly shocked."

In a minute or two we were moving along again. The moment we started, I discovered that somehow the trail had turned end for end—that is, we were traveling north-east instead of south-west. Joe said he couldn't make head or tail of it at all—the road seemed to him to be twisted all out of shape. At first, I fancied for a moment, that somehow the wagon had got turned around, and that we were simply retracing our steps; but three or four miles ahead we could see the dark line of the Boyne woods quite plainly, so beyond a doubt the road was right enough. What then? Must have been some great convulsion of nature; no other way to account for it. I leaned my head in my hands and considered the matter profoundly.

"Do you know," said Joe, "I don't believe the sun is setting at all."

"You don't, don't you?" said I, looking up.

"No; blame if I do. He's getting higher every minute."

"I believe you're right."

"It's sunrise instead of sunset. We're a pretty pair of jack-asses."

"Does seem to be sunrise; but how do you account for the sun rising in the west?"

"It's not the west—it's the north."

"Oh you're crazy—rising almost due west."

"Kawin."

"Oh, well, we won't discuss it. Have it so, if you like."

Joe said no more, and for an hour or two I cogitated over this startling phenomenon of the sun rising in the west, without arriving at any satisfactory conclusion. Coming back, I stopped where we had camped, and not till I had taken bearings and thoroughly reasoned the matter out, did I finally feel convinced that it was I who had been turned round and not the sun.

Soon we are close up to the heavy oak timber on the Boyne, and presently the ringing sound of an axe comes floating to our ears. Joyful sound! I never before heard anything half so pleasant. My heart swelled up with gratitude to the sturdy arms that swung the glittering steel. I had no idea there could be such happy, cheerful music in the sound of an axe. The regular stroke and mellow ring told of bright, blazing fires, and chairs set invitingly around; it told of hot biscuits and golden butter, fresh eggs and delicious cream; it went straight to the hearts of us weary travelers, and told of a farmer's thrifty home, and shelter and warmth, and rest, and comfort.

We are at the house of James Campbell, and the good people stir around and get us breakfast, and set us up to the dancing fire, for we are chilled through, and it takes some little time to properly thaw out. We didn't know we were so cold until we got into the warm room; but the hot breakfast and bright fire rapidly revive us, and soon we are ourselves again.

Here we meet a couple of settlers from Pembina Mountain. They are returning home from Winni-

peg, but their cattle are used up, and they are afraid they will not be able to get through with their loads. I volunteer to take a few hundred weight for them, and they are grateful. They show me Pembina Mountain through the window—a long, low hill fifteen miles away. I ask concerning the settlement, and learn that at present it consists of five houses, distributed over a hundred square miles of country. But the Duncans—that is the name of my informants—are brim-full of hope and enthusiasm. They think there is no country equal to Manitoba, and no part of Manitoba equal to Pembina Mountain.

We will continue our journey in the morning.

In the afternoon I stroll out and interview the Boyne. The prospect charmed me. I doubt if, for natural advantages, the equal of the Boyne can be found on the American continent, for agricultural purposes. A belt of heavy timber—oak, elm, ash, basswood, poplar, etc.,—perhaps half a mile wide, through the centre of which meanders the Boyne river, a little stream of pure water with clay banks and solid bottom.

Beyond the timber, on either side, lie vast stretches of rolling prairie. On the north side, this prairie is thickly studded with poplar bluffs, and broken here and there with small hay marshes; on the south, far as the eye can reach, extends a vast expanse of undulating prairie—the soil rich, black and loamy. Along the south side of the timber are scattered the settlers' houses, with the prairie sweeping grandly up to their very doors. The happy possessors of good water, good land, good timber, and good hay, the Boyne people feel justly proud of their settlement. The name "Boyne" doubtless

sprang from a corruption of the old French name "Rivière aux Isles du Bois."

We start in good time next morning. I have added five or six sacks of flour to my load; but I observe no difference in the painful gait of the oxen. When we started from Winnipeg, they appeared barely able to draw the load; with my weight added, coming across the Big Plain, they seemed barely able to draw it; and now, with six hundred weight additional, they still appear barely able to draw it. I began to have a suspicion that they were playing off, and a few days later, when we started for home without any load at all, and the big, lazy brutes seemed only able to draw the empty wagon, I felt that I had been scandalously imposed upon.

Six miles south of the Boyne, we crossed Tobacco Creek—a deep, narrow gully, dry at mid-summer, but a raging torrent in the spring and after protracted rains. I presume this creek takes its name from the red willows growing abundantly along either side. This willow is the kind called Sally-rod in Ontario—at least, it seems so to me. The Half-breeds and Indians call the inner bark "Kin-ni-kin-nick," and they smoke it, mixed with tobacco.

Shortly after crossing the creek, I separated from my companions. Joe went on with the Duncans, so as to get hay for the oxen, and I struck off for the house of a settler named Kilgour. I had some trouble finding the house, but finally succeeded, and Mr. Kilgour volunteered to hunt up my claim for me.

Now, as I said before, I took up this claim on the recommendation of a friend, who assured me that it was in every way desirable, and as I had

every confidence in the man, I felt satisfied that I had a peculiarly eligible farm. Judge, then, of my disgust, when Mr. Kilgour led me out next morning, to find that the claim I had doted over for twelve weary months, was wet and low, and naked and dreary. Not a stick of timber, and my friend had almost went into ecstacies when describing to me the acres of splendid oaks and thrifty poplars. Oh, the wretch—if I only had hold of him!

Come to think, however, I was just as well pleased not have hold of him. He was three or four sizes bigger than me.

Fortunately, I had a land-office pamphlet with me, and with the aid of this I succeeded in hunting up a claim more to my mind. To be sure the timber wasn't first-class; but right along side was a school section heavily timbered, and that was an important advantage. Besides, the more I examined the timber appertaining to the claim itself, the more satisfied I became that it just precisely suited me. There was oak, ash, maple, basswood, poplar, perhaps twenty-five acres in all, and what more could a reasonable man wish. I never thought of looking at the land. In those days nobody ever looked at land—if the timber suited the land had to.

Notwithstanding the apparent absurdity, it is a fact that those who had the whole country to chose from, almost invariably chose the worst farms. They picked for bush and they got it; but along with it they got cold, low-lying prairie—for in this section the two generally go together. I know men who rejoiced in the possession of claims almost entirely wooded. Four or five years ago, they rejoiced; they don't now. While they are clearing off an acre of bush, their neighbors alongside, can break

up twenty or thirty acres of prairie. I know other men, among the very first who visited this section of the Province, who homesteaded fine pieces of bush in the midst of vile, boggy hay marshes.

Having thoroughly satisfied myself that the new claim I had found was the best in the neighborhood, I started down to Duncan's for Joe and the oxen. Mr. Kilgour had a little hay and kindly offered me the use of his stable.

Joe and I got back to the claim late in the evening. We drove into a bay in the woods and unhitched. Then we took the lumber off, and endeavored to nail it up around our wagon box, so as to form a sort of shelter for us while we were getting out logs for a little shanty. Joe got at one end of a board with a hammer, and I got at the other end with a hammer. The weather was raw and cold, and our fingers were so numb we couldn't hold the nails properly.

Joe made three or four endeavors to nail his end, and after bruising his fingers severely, threw down his hammer and stamped on it. Then I tried to nail my end, and bang, the hammer hit my thumb and flattened it out. I threw down the board, flung the hammer at it, and jerked off the board we had succeeded in nailing up.

We looked at each other a few seconds in silence. Finally I sat down on the wagon tongue, solemn as an owl.

"Joe," said I, "what do you think of this claim?"

"Don't think much of it. That timber's all dead."

"No, not all. Quite a lot dead, though. Let us go through and look at it."

We walked diagonally through the bush and scrutinized the timber closely.

"It's a miserable piece of bush," said Joe.

"Not very good," said I; "not half as good as I thought it was."

"Fire's been through it badly."

"Yes; ruined it."

"I only saw three or four living trees."

"I didn't notice any at all."

A pause.

"If I were you," said Joe, "I wouldn't take it. The folks where I stopped last night told me of several claims a good deal better than this."

"All right. We'll go up and stay at Kilgour's to-night, and to-morrow we'll go down and have a look at them. Dead certain, this one is not worth taking."

We left our wagon and lumber where we had halted, and traveled up to Kilgour's with the oxen. Next morning, after a good warm breakfast, we returned to our wagon. I sat down on the box, and viewed the timber while Joe prepared to hitch up. Within a few feet stood a mighty oak, straight as an arrow, and vigorous with thrifty growth. If there were only a few more like that one, I thought, and looked around. Why, goodness, a little to the right was another one, and a little further on, another, and another. I could count dozens of them, to say nothing of a long row of towering, graceful topped elms.

"Joe," said I, "let us go through that bush again. Somehow, it looks different this morning."

"I've just been thinking that myself," said Joe.

We followed our steps of the night before. At the other side we paused and looked around.

"I don't think that's such a bad bush at all," said I.

"It's not very thick, but there's some first-class timber," said Joe.

"Don't seem to be much of it dead either."

"I thought it was all dead last night; but come to look close, it's not badly burned—scorched a little here and there."

"Joe, I'm going to take this place."

"It's not a bad place at all. You might do worse."

"And, look here, Joe. That bluff opposite is vacant; you can take that."

"Let us go and look at it."

We went, and Joe expressed himself thoroughly satisfied. To this day, these two claims are a standing quarrel between Joe and I. He thinks his is the best claim in the North-West, but I know better.

We returned to our camp, nailed up our boards, set up our stove, and prepared for work. In a few days we had raised the walls of a little shanty, twelve by eighteen feet. I intended to live in this shanty for a few months, until I could erect a more commodious house, and I would then use the shanty for a stable.

As the weather had set in extremely mild, I concluded to make a start for Winnipeg immediately, for fear the Assiniboine river should break up and thus delay us crossing. Besides, our provisions were about done. I had brought what I considered an extravagant supply from Winnipeg, but evidently Pembina Mountain air was rather hard on provisions. Every time I sat down to eat—generally, five or six times a day—I used to feel astounded at the quantity I could stow away. It always reminded me of the man who fed two pails of feed to a small pig, watched the little beast devour the whole

of it, and then picked him up and dropped him into one of the pails and had room for more.

I engaged a neighbor to thatch the shanty, and started on the return trip. The snow was now all gone off the prairie, and just before leaving I put a match to a clump of grass to see how it would burn.

It burned first-class—whooping and roaring and cracking away off before the wind like a race-horse. When I saw it spreading so rapidly, I would have liked to put it out; but I should have considered that before I touched the match.

To start a prairie fire is one of the easiest things I know of, and there is a wonderful attraction about it, too; but there is nothing in this world makes a man feel his littleness so intensely as to give way to the temptation to touch a match to a patch of heavy prairie grass. In a moment, the roaring, raging demon he has liberated leaps and bounds and crackles in a wild, tumultous whirl of devastating flame, ever extending its line, ever rolling onward, here pausing while it slowly licks up the short grass on a high ridge, and there mounting high up in a great sheet of exulting fire as it dashes and plunges into a depression containing long grass. The poor insignificant man stands behind and, in mute helplessness, gazes while he feels how utterly contemptible is all human power.

Fortunately, the fire I started expended itself without doing any damage, and I had reason to congratulate myself that I did start it. Before our return, a prairie fire, carried by a high wind, traversed the entire settlement, and my shanty would have shared the fate of some others, if the grass had not been already burned around it.

We had another extremely unpleasant day for crossing the Big Plain. The sky was overcast, and a cold, chilly north wind beat in our faces. During the day I tried my hand at driving oxen for the first time. Ever since we started from Winnipeg, I had secretly held the opinion that Joe did not properly understand driving oxen. I thought he mixed matters up too much, but I kept this opinion to myself, and let him get along the best way he could.

To-day, however, I concluded to try what good, straightforward talking would do. The off ox—that is the one on the right-hand side—was named Lion; but he didn't look a very great deal like a lion for all that, no more than his mate, who was named Lamb, looked like a lamb. Lion, the old reprobate, had a great fancy for cropping off the old, dead prairie grass as he traveled along, and was constantly swinging off to his side of the road, and dragging the innocent Lamb with him—though I believe in his secret soul, Lamb liked it a little himself. I made up my mind to stop this work.

Whip in hand, I took up my position within convenient striking distance, and presently, when Lion hauled off to the right, I touched him gently and said,

"Haw, Lion."

He didn't pay the least attention. I touched him again, a little harder this time, and repeated,

"Haw, Lion, haw!"

He stepped up a little, but swung around still farther from the trail. I struck him full force and yelled:

"Haw, Lion, haw; you old brute, why don't you haw!"

The oxen were then traveling at nearly right

angles to the trail, and stepping out briskly, I got excited, and belabored them unceasingly, keeping up a steady—

"Haw, haw, then; Lion, Lion, you old brute, haw; haw, haw, now; why don't you haw; I'll teach you; haw, haw, haw; oh you brute!"

By this time they were turned clean around, and traveling for the Boyne on a trot. I knew Joe was laughing in his sleeve, and I tell you it was a good thing he had a sleeve to laugh into. I jumped out of the wagon, and by dint of running from one side to the other, succeeded at last in getting the stubborn brutes straight on the trail again.

Then the whole play commenced over again, with precisely the same result. This was repeated three times, and half of another time. I succumbed, exhausted and demoralized.

Joe took the whip, and this is what he said:

"Haw, whoa haw, back haw, whoa back haw; whoa, whoa back haw; gee haw, back gee haw; whoa back gee haw!"

Yes, that's what he said, and the old brutes of oxen immediately swung around into the proper track, and traveled along as contented as could be. It beats me.

We were very late starting this morning, and consequently darkness came on while we were yet several miles from Stinking River. I shall never forget that night. Towards evening it commenced to freeze keenly, and little ponds of water here and there became coated with a thin layer of glaring, slippery ice. At first we did not mind this much, and the oxen smashed through it indifferently; but after a few hours the ice became strong enough to almost bear the cattle, and after a fall or two the

unfortunate animals refused to venture on it. Thus we were obliged to veer around, now to this side, now to that, in order to avoid these ponds.

When within a few miles of Stinking River, we suddenly found ourselves confronted with a great, glaring expanse of slippery ice. The cattle stopped, and Joe and I looked at each other in dismay. I went to one side and Joe to the other, to see if we could get around, but apparently it extended for miles. I ran out on the ice, and found that a hundred yards away, the ice field was thickly studded with clumps of willows. If we could only get across to the willows, perhaps we might be able to make our way through.

I went back to Joe and reported. There was nothing else for it, so at it we went with the axes, and cut a road through. The water was not more than a foot deep, but what with splashing and wading, we wet ourselves pretty thoroughly. Gracious, but it was cold! If we had had time, we might have frozen to death right there, easily; but we didn't have time.

The ice once broken, the oxen traveled along well enough till we reached the willows. Then the sprawling and slipping, and sliding, and holding back commenced. Wherever there was a few yards of ice between two clumps of willows, we were obliged to cut our way. I don't know how far we traveled in this way—it might be a mile, or only half a mile; but I do know that about two o'clock in the morning two utterly exhausted youths and a yoke of played out cattle found their way into Murray's, rejoiced to feel themselves once more under shelter.

We succeeded in crossing the ~~Assiniboine all~~

right next day, by putting one ox across at a time, and hauling the wagon over afterwards. I then struck out for Winnipeg, leaving Joe to follow with the oxen. I arrived in due time, and—went to bed.

CHAPTER VII.

OUR COUNTRY RESIDENCE—PEMBINA MOUNTAIN—MONEY IN POTATOES—THE DRY BED—TERRIBLE CUT—JUNE FLOODS—GRASSHOPPERS—MOSQUITOES—BULL DOGS—MONEY IN PIGS—SNOW BLIND—FAMINE—MONEY IN HENS—MAKING DRAINS—INDIAN TRADING—TIMBER SUPPLY—NELSONVILLE—AVERAGE YIELD—HARD TRIP—HALF-BREED RESERVE.

As soon as the river was opened, and the ferry at Headingly commenced running, I started Joe back to Pembina Mountains with my household goods. A few weeks later I hired a horse and rig and followed with my wife.

On the twelfth of May, I crossed the Big Plain for the third time. We brought cold tea with us, from Murray's, to drink on the road, as there was no water to be had. I often heard people speak of the Big Marsh on this road, but I was at a loss to know where it was situated. As well as I could see, the land was all dry, though perhaps if the grass had not been burned off, I would have found this Marsh sooner. However, I discovered it afterwards all right enough, and several others along with it.

At Tobacco Creek the water had been high enough to carry away the little temporary bridge,

but had since subsided, and we crossed without difficulty. The prairie now, as far as we could see, was burned over, and as we approached the timber after dusk, a light here and there would shine out, flare up, and die away again. I couldn't make out what those lights were at first. Soon I discovered that the fire had played sad havoc with the timber in places, and the lights were the last flickering sparks of the conflagration.

For a while I feared the shanty might have been destroyed, but presently its rude outline loomed up in the dusk, and I realized what a very pleasant thing it is to have even an old log shanty to call home. The dog barked, Joe opened the door, and I jumped out and handed Mrs. G. down.

"This, my dear," said I, ushering her in, "is, for the present, our country residence."

Goodness, what a difference circumstances make in one's sentiments. Coming in out of the lonely night, my wife thought our rough, mud plastered shanty was a nice comfortable little cabin, small but cheerful; and I thought so, too.

After supper and a chat with Joe concerning his trip, we prepared to retire. The beds were already in their places, and, after the style of the country, a quilt nailed up separated my bed-room from the rest of the house.

In the morning I discovered that the first thing to be done was to dig a well. Joe had been using water from a pond-hole in a little gully at the back of the shanty, and vile stuff it was, sure enough. In order to save digging, I commenced in the bottom of the gully, and was fortunate enough to strike a bed of water-bearing gravel four feet down. I have dug three wells since, but none of them equal

that first one for quantity or quality. The water, I think, was the best I ever tasted in the Province; nevertheless, the well in the bottom of the gully was a terrible nuisance. Every freshet, the well would fill full of sand and rubbish, and until the gully entirely ceased running, the water was not good.

Having thus settled the water question, I will now have time to describe Pembina Mountain and surrounding country, as seen through my spectacles. Mountain, in Manitoba, does not mean—to use the school geography definition—"a lofty elevation of land."

For instance, the first time I was down in Springfield, it suddenly occurred to me that there was a Springfield Mountain, and I asked my companion concerning it. He said it wasn't a very high one—didn't hardly deserve the name.

"In fact," said he, "we have been ascending it for the last ten minutes, and in another hundred yards we'll be straddle of the highest peak."

I looked around to see if he was in earnest, and finding that he was, I ventured the opinion that it would take an acrobat, and a mighty good acrobat, to straddle that peak.

Properly speaking, Pembina Mountain is not a mountain at all, though considerable of an improvement on Springfield Mountain. It is simply a rise of land, and marks the western limit of the Red River Valley. In my neighborhood, it is perhaps three hundred feet high, and runs in a north-west and south-east direction. The east side is coated more or less with groves of poplar, balm of Gilead, and scrubby oak, with here and there large patches of bare clay, thickly studded with immense boulders. There is no west side. For a prairie country,

Pembina Mountain exhibits some excellent bits of wild and romantic scenery.

At the foot of the main elevation are numerous groves of thrifty oak, growing on a sandy soil mixed with gravel, the wash, probably, of the ancient lake that ages ago covered the Red River Valley. Traveling east, we cross a mile stretch of flat, heavy, clay land, without a particle of sand, and without the least sign of ever having grown timber of any kind. We now come to a gentle fall of several feet, and here we find a well defined line of thrifty oak, growing on a sandy soil mixed with gravel. Traveling east again, we cross another flat of clay land, with spots here and there mixed with sand and growing oak timber. This flat is half a mile wide, and also terminates in a gentle fall of several feet. Again we find a well-defined line of thrifty oak, growing on a sandy soil mixed with gravel. Still traveling east, we traverse another such flat, terminating similarly, and again growing oak on a sandy soil mixed with gravel.

We have now reached the last of the timber. Eastward a mighty plain with a more or less sandy soil, extends to the Red River, over forty miles away.

These are the characteristics of the country in my neighborhood, and I presume the same obtain throughout. This vast plain, to which I have referred, extending from the boundary line to the Boyne, and from Pembina Mountain to Red River, comprises some of the best land in the North-West, and is by far the largest section of contiguous good land in the Province. In the centre a stretch six miles wide by twelve or fifteen long is at the present time occupied by a vast marsh, but beyond a

doubt in the course of time the water will be drained off and the land redeemed.

In '75 the few settlers at Pembina Mountain fondly hoped that in the course of fifteen or twenty years, this plain would become settled, notwithstanding the absence of timber. Before the summer was over, a long line of camp fires, extending for miles and miles, announced to the lonely settlers that six thousand Mennonites had located on seventeen townships.

It is 1879 now, and farms on that plain are as hard to get, and are as valuable, as our much vaunted timber claims along the mountain, and west a hundred miles to Turtle Mountain, rolls the tide of immigration.

My claim and Pembina Mountain, those are two subjects I love to dwell on, and now I've got started on Pembina Mountain, it requires considerable of an effort to drop it and strike on to something else. I could easily strike off into an eloquent discription of my claim, but I fear it won't do. I am a generous, good-natured individual, and therefore freely sacrifice my own feelings in the matter.

Well, where was I? Loafing around, I guess. Whenever I want to know what I was doing at any given time, I conclude that I was loafing around, and I nearly always hit it to a dot. This time I was loafing around after digging a well. I had to quit it, though, in order to go to the Boyne for potatoes with which to make my fortune.

You see, on account of the grasshopper ravages, potatoes were selling high—two dollars per bushel; and as I had no land ready for grain, I concluded to go it strong on potatoes. I purchased fifty bushel of seed potatoes at the Boyne—of all the Province,

the Boyne alone escaped the grasshopper visitation —with which I calculated to plant four acres of scrub land; four acres of potatoes, at five hundred bushels to the acre, two thousand bushels; two thousand bushels of potatoes at two dollars per bushel, four thousand dollars.

That was straight, honest figuring, wasn't it? Talk about farming not paying; I rather fancied I could make it pay. There was just one thing prevented me making that four thousand dollar pile. Something entirely unlooked for, and over which I had no control, and this was it: The grasshoppers came along and ate up my potatoes the same as they did other people's, no less. I felt terribly grieved at the outrage.

After I got through planting potatoes, I made a trip across the country from the Boyne to the neighborhood of Baie St. Paul, on the Assiniboine, to purchase a cow. A settler from that section was along with me—I could never have made the trip alone, as we struck across the trackless prairie thirty miles. We found no water on the road, although we passed through several extensive hay meadows. For the most part I thought it was a fine, rolling country.

My companion, David McKinnon, lived on what is known as the Dry Bed, at one time the bed of Stinking River, six miles south of Baie St. Paul. I bought a cow and a calf there from an old acquaintance, a man I could rely on. My wife told me to be sure and get a quiet cow, and I did, though she had an awful suspicious look about her. That cow was the best investment I ever made. Nearly five years after, I sold her for almost what I gave, and had still on hand five cows, and twelve head of

young stock, seventeen head, all the proceeds of that one cow.

Before leaving the Dry Bed, I arranged to purchase a number of pigs in the fall. I thought that, next to potatoes, pork was the most profitable article I could raise. I intended to go strong on pork, then selling at fifteen dollars per hundred. I proposed to fat my pigs on acorns.

When I got back home with my cow, I tied her to a tree and called my wife out to look at her. Mrs. G. said it was the most savage looking cow she ever saw. I said I was positive she was perfectly quiet, and requested Mrs. G. to get a pail and try milking.

The cow was as quiet as a lamb, but a little uneasy at the strange hand. Mrs. G. was afraid of her life. She stood as far back as possible, and stretched out her hand to the farthest limit, and every time the cow moved a foot, or turned her head, Mrs. G. bolted behind a tree. We had an awful time milking that cow for a few weeks. Used to tie her up short to a tree; then I'd hold her by the horns, and Joe would hold her by the tail, and Mrs. G. would reach away over, and say, "So, Cherry; so, now, Cherry," and dribble out a thin stream of milk. Neither Joe nor I could squeeze out a drop, so there was nothing for it but to persevere. After awhile the difficulty diminished, and eventually old Cherry got to be a great favorite with my wife. But for a week or two, it would have been just about as easy to milk a South African lioness.

I now made a start on my new house. Joe hauled out a few logs, and I sharpened up the broad-axe, preparatory to commencing hewing operations. I never did hew, but neither did Joe; and therefore

I considered myself as capable as he. On the other hand, Joe was well used to plowing, and I was not. With a view to economy, therefore, I kept Joe at the plow, breaking up prairie, while I undertook the dressing of house timber.

I intended to build a first-class house, and having several unoccupied homesteads, besides the school section, to steal from, I was careful in selecting my "sticks." Joe told me I needn't be so particular, as, whatever house I built now, would be but a temporary one at best.

The idea! and I fully prepared to devote the entire summer to the erection of a mansion house worthy to accommodate a worthy family for several succeeding generations. I never positively settled how large it should be; but I designed it so that the present structure would be but a portion of the imposing edifice of the future, successive wings having been added to meet the requirements of my increasing family.

Axe in hand, I took up position on a stick of timber one morning, and soon succeeded in getting in three score-hacks; this satisfied me that I could score-hack successfully. Score-hacking is cutting little notches a foot apart or so, along the side of a stick of timber; the blocks are then split off, and the flat surface smoothed with a broad-axe.

Having put in the three little notches, I took a rest. Then I tried my hand at splitting off blocks. Zip! the axe glanced on a knot, swung around with great force, and caught my right foot across the instep. I looked at my foot, and immediately dropped the axe. I didn't feel the least bit of pain, but the boot was cut from the sole on one side almost around to the sole on the other side. I stood still

and called Joe from the plowing. He came down and looked at the cut, bleeding freely now.

"I'm afraid it's a bad cut," said Joe.

"Awful," said I.

"How did you do it?"

"Axe glanced."

"Does it hurt much?"

"No."

"Good gracious! I don't know what to do."

"Neither do I. Oh, Lord! I'm afraid I'm a goner. There's no surgeon nearer than Winnipeg, and that would take six days."

Joe was terribly excited, and I was scared half to death. Our nearest neighbor lived two miles and a half away. Finally, with Joe's assistance, I hobbled over to the shanty. My wife thought I was bleeding to death, sure. Joe wanted to take the boot off, but at first I wouldn't let him, for fear the end of my foot would draw off along with it. Evidently, however, something had to be done, and at last I consented to have the boot drawn off very carefully.

I fully believed my foot was almost severed. When Joe slowly pulled my boot off, I expected my toes would hang down limp, but they didn't; and when I took the sock off, behold, there was just the least little bit of a cut on the ridge of my foot. I felt mean for making such a big fuss over such a little cut. I couldn't understand how I managed to cut such a terrible gash in the boot, and such an insignificant one in the foot. Joe said he didn't believe I could do it again if I tried a month; but I kept my curiosity in check, and didn't try.

After a night's meditation, I concluded that I couldn't hew, and that, after all, Joe would perhaps

make better headway at the logs than I would. Accordingly, Joe and I changed round. I followed the plow, and found myself in my proper groove, or furrow. No cutting feet about this work, and it was so easy a child could hold the plow.

But a child couldn't drive oxen—not worth a cent. I had several contests with old Lion and Lamb, and I always came out second best, with my dignity terribly ruffled. The old brutes imposed on me most shamefully. They knew their advantage, and when I'd yell at them, they'd look around and view me calmly, as though to say, "Oh, it's all right, mister; you needn't apologize." Nevertheless I succeeded in breaking up twenty acres before fall.

A few days after I came from Winnipeg, I got Joe to plow up a little patch around the shanty for a garden. Just in front of the door was a considerable stretch of luxuriant grass, of the kind called "bone" grass by the settlers. A little patch of this I also had plowed up, on which I sowed a couple of pails of oats, to see how they would do on sod.

About the middle of June, my garden stuff was looking splendid, and the oats were thriving wonderfully. So far, we had beautiful weather, but one evening towards the middle of the month, the sky became overcast with dark clouds, and presently it commenced raining steadily, accompanied by a cold raw east wind. It must have rained unusually heavily during the night, although we did not hear it, on account of the thatched roof. In the morning when we arose it was still raining.

I took the pail and started to the well for some water. What a sight met my eyes on opening the door. My oat patch was in the centre of a pond,

and on turning the corner of the house, I found that the dry gully in the rear was changed to a foaming torrent, and the water was overflowing the banks, and rushing in diminutive rivulets over my garden, carrying away the loosened soil, and with it the growing plants, down past the shanty in a broad stream to the bone-grass depression in front.

My garden was ruined forever. The rain continued for two days longer, and at the end of that time the whole country was more or less under water. At one time it stood a foot deep on my patch of oats. Fortunately, when it cleared up, it cleared up for good, and the water rapidly dissappeared. My oats recovered, and in a few days were as thrifty as ever.

We have learned to recognize this down pour of rain as an institution of the country, and it goes under the name of "June Floods." I have now been farming here five years, and each succeeding year these rains have become more violent and long continued. That first one convinced me that I must find a different site for my new house, and accordingly, while the water was still high, I picked out a dry place near my breaking; well satisfied that I would there be above flood mark. During the high water of '79 that site was covered with water three inches deep.

After the water had all disappeared, vegetation took a fresh start, and the astounding growth of my potatoes was delightful to behold. I used to go out and look at them three times a day, and plan out how I would expend those four thousand dollars. It was pretty hard to decide on the most desirable method, and preyed considerably on my mind. At last, however, I settled the matter, by

deciding to invest all my spare capital for a few years in real estate, until I had a farm of two or three townships. Just when I had the knotty problem fairly solved, transpired a calamity of woeful magnitude.

From some chance, there was no grasshoppers in my immediate neighborhood, although all around me the vorracious little insects swarmed in millions. One bright morning at the latter end of June, I went out as usual to view my potatoes. They were lovely. At noon, while I was sitting in the door after dinner, I observed a few diminutive grasshopper skip past. The numbers gradually increased, until the whole door yard swarmed with them, I went out to view my potatoes, and found the vines covered with the little pests.

Returning from my plowing at night, I discovered that my patch of oats had disappeared; gone entirely, nothing but the black ground remained. I walked over to the potatoe field, and found nothing but a ghastly array of dirty naked stocks, covered with grasshoppers. In the morning there were no stalks. There ended my potato castle.

I had almost forgotten to say something about mosquitoes. These pests get warmed into existence about the first of June, reach their supreme, undiluted glory about the latter part of July, and retire into obscurity in the beginning of September. I doubt much if the country will ever be free of them, —certainly not until the bulk of the land is under cultivation. I know this is rather discouraging for old people settled in the Province, but I can't help it—I love the truth. Some people pretend to hold mosquitoes in contempt, but I don't; I recognise them as *the* great drawback of the country. In

grasshopper time, I always want to raise stock; in flood time, I want to live on the top of Pembina Mountain; in winter, I want to sit in the house by the fire, and have a boy to carry in wood; in mosquito time, I want to leave the country forever.

Of a cloudy evening, the diminutive insects encompass the land in one vast, unbroken cloud. They get into your eyes and nose and mouth; they cover your hands and neck and face; they are everywhere; they send the cattle home snorting and bellowing to the smudge fire; they make the dog yelp with agony; they fill the house and swarm the bed-room; comfort is banished and sleep handcuffed.

I have seen settlers, anxious to get some breaking done, endeavoring to drive the horrid pests away by lighting a smudge fire at each end of the furrow and one in the centre; and I have sat on a cane-bottomed chair without a cushion, and rolled off clouds of profanity that, economized, might have lasted a life time.

This picture is not over-drawn in the least; but of course it is only odd days, under exceptionally favorable meteorological conditions, that such a description holds good, though the insects are bad enough all through the summer months, goodness knows.

Another insect we have here goes by the very appropriate name of "bull dog." I don't see any difference between these bull dogs and the horse-fly of Ontario. They somewhat resemble a wasp in size and appearance. There the resemblance ceases—the bull dog's head is his business end. Cattle and horses suffer terribly from these flys. They settle on any old sores, in the nostrils, and under the eyes, and every time they bite they cut the skin. Apparently they have no relish for human blood,

but when they do take hold occasionally, you always find it out without anybody telling you.

Mosquitoes love the cloudy days, and bull dogs love the sunshine, so between them they keep things going pretty regular. Fortunately, the bull dogs' term of office is brief—from a month to six weeks.

About the twelfth of July, I commenced haying operations. I cut the bone grass (? "bon" grass) in front of my shanty, and found it made excellent hay, notwithstanding that some of my neighbors assured me it was utterly worthless. For a given quantity of hay, a good deal more ground must be cut over of bone grass than of marsh grass; but after five years' trial I am satisfied that bone grass makes the most nutritious hay. It requires to be cut early, before the top shoots, and the cattle will then eat it up clean; but if it is allowed to get a little ripe, the stalks harden and become unfit for food. Bone grass has a long, narrow blade, wiry to look at, and where it grows thick is an infallible sign that the land is wet, though not necessarily low.

I have heard people mention dozens of weeds and shrubs, that only grow on this kind of land or that kind of land, but I know that this is an error. I have taken pains to observe that almost all kinds of weeds grow on all kinds of land. As a general thing, where rose bushes grow thickly, the land is dry and good; but they will grow on wet land and they will grow on poor land—that is, poor land for this country. There are a few weeds that grow on wet land only; but the surest test for wet land is the dense covering of grass.

I have referred to the excellent water in my well. For some unaccountable cause, a peculiar flavor attached to it about the middle of July. It gradually

deteriorated, until finally it became so outrageously vile that we could drink it no longer.

I removed the covering, and bailed out the water. I observed that it was partially filled, and I got the spade and started to work. I soon found the difficulty. What do you think it was? I'll tell you, and save blunders: there was just two feet solid of dead grasshoppers in the bottom of that well. We had been drinking grasshopper soup for over two weeks.

While I am on the subject I will tell the balance of what I know about grasshoppers. These pests emigrated in the beginning of August, as soon as their wings became properly developed. I don't know where they emigrated to; it never transpired. Those learned in grasshopper anatomy, say the climate of Manitoba is not suited to the grasshopper constitution, and that, therefore, after a few generations, they become debilitated, and parasytes attack them, and are deposited with their eggs, and grow with their growth, until finally the nimble grasshopper succumbs to the increasing pressure and expires in misery. It is claimed that the swarm of '75 was so infected, and that in all probability the bulk of them expired while *en route*.

In Minnesota, during the grasshopper plague, the State Government offered a bounty for grasshopper eggs—not to eat, but to destroy; after the insects were hatched they paid so much a bushel for the 'hoppers themselves, decreasing the price as the grasshoppers increased in size. They did this more to give employment to the destitute, than for any other reason. In Manitoba the Dominion Government expended a considerable amount on provisions and seed grain, which they loaned to all settlers desiring aid.

The United States Government finally took up the matter, and appointed two commissioners to investigate the grasshopper question to the bottom. These gentlemen traversed immense sections of country, gained all the information possible, and in due course published an exhaustive report.

We thus learn that this particular kind of grasshopper is a native of the Rocky Mountains. There on elevated plains, the insects luxuriate. Once in a while, at irregular intervals, and for some reason not yet known, vast swarms leave the old homestead and try their luck in foreign parts. These swarms sometimes locate in Manitoba, sometimes in Minnesota, or Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, or Texas. For a few seasons they travel back and forth, but eventually, as before stated, their constitution gives way, and the insects disappear.

Although we have had no grasshoppers, now, for four years, still, in view of that Rocky Mountain breeding ground, I always feel a little uneasy during the latter part of July and beginning of August.

After the grasshoppers left, my potatoes took a fresh start. For over a month, they had been kept eaten off close to the ground, and consequently the bulk of the seed had rotted. However, a small portion survived, and these now sproutted and threw up stalks with wonderful vigor. The growth was astounding, and I had hopes of a considerable quantity of potatoes yet. Unfortunately, the frost came unusually early, and this last hope collapsed. However, the new potatoes were formed, and although they were not large enough to market, they would do for pig feed, and I therefore concluded to get in my pigs from the Dry Bed immediately.

In September, I decided to return to Winnipeg

for the winter. Joe agreed to stay behind and get out rails. Owing to various delays, I had been unable to get my new house erected, though the timber was all ready. Joe undertook to attend to that, too, and have it raised during the fall.

The house was to be twenty by twenty-four feet. What a sad lowering of my pretensions; I don't like to think about it. Still, at the time it was raised, it was the largest building on Pembina Mountain. I sold it afterwards for forty-five dollars, and the man who bought it moved the noble structure seven miles out on the prairie.

After moving myself and wife into Winnipeg I instructed Joe to call around by the Dry Bed, and get all the pigs he could. I knew I could make money out of pork. My potatoes would make first-class pig feed and were good for nothing else. In the spring I would turn the pigs out in the bush, and they would live on roots and one thing or another until fall. They would then fatten on acorns, Thus, I would have a large quantity of pork, and probably a couple of hundred little pigs, for the trifling cost of the first ones.

It was a wonderful speculation, profitable beyond anything I could think of, and I congratulated myself on being the first to grasp it. Fine thing to have a clear business head; not much of a plodding farmer about me. Nothing like enterprise.

Joe succeeded in purchasing twenty-seven little pigs at two dollars each. Some time afterwards one of my plodding neighbors, called at my house in Winnipeg, and asked me if I would sell some of those pigs. He said they were all dying off—ten or twelve dead already. I concluded to sell, and wrote out to Joe to sell the whole of them if he

couldn't keep them alive. He sold all but two. Those two tried hard to live; but one cold day towards spring, they got discouraged, and kicked the bucket. Thus ended my pig speculation.

I have, of course tried raising pork since, and have probably been as successful as others. I tried the native breed of pigs, called "prairie racers," and lost money. I paid high prices and got good pigs, and still lost money. I am going out of pigs. While pork was selling at from ten to fifteen dollars a hundred, I could do well enough; but now that it will not bring more than six or seven dollars, and acorns a decidedly uncertain crop, I have decided to retire from the business. My pork, the present season, '79, cost me nine cents a pound and I sold it for seven. Don't pay.

On the 2nd of April, '76, I again moved to the farm. In town the snow was pretty much all gone, but after crossing the Assiniboine, we found the sleighing excellent—roads as hard and smooth as a pavement. At Headingly I purchased a dozen hens, put them in a box, and covered the box with a quilt. At the Boyne, I took off the quilt to throw in some grain, and discovered that close confinement don't agree with hens; four of them were terribly sick and low spirited, and the others were dead—suffocated.

Crossing the Big Plain this time, I experienced slightly that disagreeable affection of the eyes known as snow-blindness. This is caused by the rays of the bright sun reflected up from the glittering snow. It only occurs on broad expanses of plain, where there is nothing to relieve the glaring sheet of monotonous white, and in the spring of the year, when the snow is crystalized.

Napoleon's soldiers experienced a similiar affection in the sand deserts of Egypt, but with this difference, that while many of Napoleon's soldiers never recovered their sight, snow-blindness is but a temporary affection, and soon wears away.

Green goggles, or a bundle of green cloth tied round the hat so as to shade the eyes, will prevent it; and humane people generally hang an old coat or something over the eyes of their cattle while traveling at such times. My oxen suffered considerably, their eyes being weak and watery for a week or two.

A few days after reaching home, I sent Joe back to the Boyne for a load of seed wheat. He started early in the morning with a wagon, as the snow was now all gone, and late at night returned with the report that Tobacco Creek was running and he was unable to cross. I couldn't wait for the water to go down, as we had also a couple of trips to make for potatoes.

Accordingly, I accompanied Joe as far as the creek to see what could be done. I was obliged to confess that the prospect was not good. The creek was running full, perhaps twelve or fifteen feet deep, and fifty or sixty feet wide.

On the the other side was camped a man and his wife, with an ox cart, waiting for the water to subside. The man shouted across:

"I guess you'd better turn back, had'nt you?"

"Not yet. We'll make a try, anyhow."

"I wish you luck. I rather guess this is the worst place I've come to since leaving Winnipeg."

"Have you a claim out here?"

"No; but I'll hunt one up."

Just then a rooster stuck his head out through a

box on the cart, and expanded his lungs in a joyous, exultant crow.

"Hallo," said I, "you've got some chickens along?"

"Yes, you bet; it wouldn't do to come to this country without stock of some kind."

I smiled and closed the dialogue.

Joe and I lifted off the wagon box and placed it in the water. It made an admirable ferry—half raft and half boat. I paddled across and back as an experiment, before proceeding further. We then unhitched the oxen and drove them into the creek, first one and then the other. They didn't like to go into the water, but we meant business, and soon they were on the other side.

I then ferried across our enterprising settler and his wife, helped him across with his ox and cart, saw them resume their journey, and we then resumed ours.

Joe and I ferried thirty bushels of wheat and thirty-five bushels of potatoes across Tobacco Creek in the way I have described, two bags at a time, that being the utmost capacity of our ferry boat.

This creek is now spanned by a good substantial bridge. For three seasons the settlers fruitlessly petitioned the proper authorities to put on a bridge, but finding that their requirements were utterly ignored, they turned out men and teams and bridged it themselves. The bridge, at the time it was built, was one of the best in the Province.

For various reasons, I had been very late with my breaking the previous summer. To rot properly, the sod should be turned over as thin as possible, and not later than the middle of July at furthest. Turned back, then, late in the fall or early in the

spring, with a little of the sub-soil, it works up well with the harrow. I was perfectly aware of this, and as I could get no breaking done in time, I concluded to plow deep, so as to turn up enough soil to cover the seed well without ploughing again in the spring.

This was another of my brilliant ideas, by following out which I hoped to raise just as good crops on the late breaking, and moreover save one plowing, thus effecting a considerable saving of time and labor. I always was an economical manager, and I confidentially informed Joe that I would show the farmers around here some new wrinkles in agriculture.

Alas, when harvest time came, my neighbors who stuck to the old wrinkle, had abundant crops, and my field was scarcely worth cutting. Some of it I cut, and some of it I didn't.

After seeding I fixed up my new house and moved into it. I now found that the old shanty being half a mile away, was scarcely convenient enough to use as a stable. I had to build another stable.

I now thoroughly realized the truthfulness of Joe's remark that the new house would be but a temporary one at best. Already I could see that the hewing was not first-class, and that the logs were rough and uneven; but I consoled myself with the thought that it would make a first-class granary when I built my next house.

This summer quite a few settlers came in and located in our midst, and finally one squatted down within a mile and a half of me. I felt it a real luxury to have a convenient next door neighbor.

In the midst of this rejoicing, however, a sore

affliction cast a gloomy shadow of melancholy over the entire male portion of the community.

Famine was rampant throughout the settlement. Not bread famine, alas, but tobacco famine! This sorrowful condition of affairs lasted two dreary desolate weeks. Tea, kin-ni-kin-nick, oak bark, grated nutmeg, wild sunflower leaves, coffee, potato tops, and various other articles, were tried as substitutes without success.

Once in a while, a vehicle passing along the road, half a mile in front, would shoot down a bright, warm ray of hope to my agonized soul, and I would rush up only to meet with dark, dismal disappointment. Preachers—nearly always preachers. Alas for human nature.

At length a worthy setter, unable longer to endure the gloomy misery, and actuated by a noble desire to aid his fellow men, started for Winnipeg amidst popular rejoicings. Eagerly his return was watched for, and when, a week later, the white top of his wagon gleamed over the prairie, the glad tidings rapidly flew round, and the heart of the people throbbed in swells of joyous gratitude.

Once more dark despair gave way to bounding hope, and cheery joy again beamed round the fireside. That man was voted a hero and the saviour of this country, and the settlement took a week's holidays to luxuriate in tobacco smoke.

It was shortly after this, that one day a young man named Westover called at my house. He had been land-hunting, and was returning disgusted. I asked him if he could not find a claim to suit, and he said he could get lots of prairie land, but he didn't want land without bush. He said that he was going over to Dakota, and that he believed he

could get what would suit him there. I tried to dissuade him, but it was no use.

Unfortunately, Westover was no exception; thousands of good Canadian farmers have settled and are settling in Dakota. In general, I think the land is not nearly as good as in Manitoba, a great deal of it being very sandy; nevertheless, there is no denying that considerable sections are really desirable, and the inducements held out by the American Government have prevailed on numbers of intending Manitoba settlers to locate there instead.

However, I want to tell about Westover. I met him at West Lynne in the fall, and he told me he had taken up land on the Tongue River in Dakota—splendid claim, he said, beautiful land and lots of bush. He was going home to Ontario now, and would return in the spring with his wife and family.

The following spring I had occasion to go to West Lynne to buy a yoke of cattle. I heard of a remarkably cheap pair across the River, and went across to see them and their owner, and, lo! Westover was the man.

"Hello, Westover," said I, "I thought you were in Dakota."

"So I was," said he.

"And what's the matter," I asked.

"Oh, d—n such a country. It's a regular lake—two feet of water all over my plowing."

"Why, you told me last fall it was nice land."

"So it was, then; but I tell you it's different now. Tongue River is over its banks and the whole country flooded."

"And what are you going to do now?"

"Going back to Ontario."

"I'll tell you what, you come out to the Mountain with me, and I'll hunt you up a place that won't flood."

"No. Going back to Ontario—got enough of this country."

"Where's your family?"

"Over here at the hotel, ready to start back as soon as I can sell the stuff."

"What do you want for the oxen?"

"I want to sell all together—oxen, cow, plow, stove, and some small items. Come down and look at them. They cost me three hundred and fifty dollars, and I'll let them go for two hundred."

This was more money than I had, and as Westover would not sell the oxen alone, we did not make a deal. He easily sold, though, and returned to Ontario, and thus the North-West lost one good settler.

I must now tell you of another grand speculation I conceived. I have already mentioned purchasing some hens in the spring. I had wonderful luck with hens after that sad mishap when eight of them departed to that land from whose bourne no hen ever returns. The surviving four, however, performed their duty nobly. In the fall I had forty-eight chickens, besides the old hens. This, I felt, was something like the thing; this was replenishing the earth in magnificent style.

I concluded to go into hens. Hens were worth fifty cents each, and eggs were worth thirty cents per dozen. I made a calculation, and, remembering my pig investment, I figured down fine.

Now, forty-eight chickens from four hens, is an average of twelve to a hen; but in order to be on the safe side, I put it at ten. Next summer, then,

my fifty-two would increase to five hundred and twenty; but throw of the twenty for contingencies. The next summer I would have five thousand, the next fifty thousand, and the next summer five hundred thousand.

I proposed to sell out then and retire. Of course, by continuing another year, I could have five millions, but I am, and always have been, a moderate man. The eggs I didn't count anything on; let them go for the keep of the hens.

Now, then, I have said hens sold at fifty cents each. But I had too much good sense to figure at that price. I brought the price down to twenty cents each, and counted it up. One Hundred Thousand Dollars.

There was a speculation! and everything figured close, too. That was just my ideal "pile," and I spread myself for it, accordingly. If I had only thought of hens before, I might have been a year or two ahead. Sometimes a neighbor would call, and, noticing my fifty chickens, would remark that I had a nice flock. I used to smile, and say "just wait—I'll show you chickens." Often I used to laugh to myself, when I'd conjure up to my mind's eye, those five hundred thousand chickens strutting and cackling over the prairie.

Before going further I will now tell you the result of this speculation. In the first place, then, of those forty-eight chickens, I soon learned that twenty-six were roosters, and I knew I never could get those lazy wretches to lay anyway half-regularly or to hatch decently, and therefore I killed off most of them. Secondly, a fox got into my hen-house one night and carried off eighteen before morning—pretty liberal allowance for one fox, I thought.

Thus I found my flock reduced to twelve.

I had hopes yet, however. I bought forty more, and started next season with fifty. Very often, when people wish to express a low opinion of a person's intelligence; they'll say: "He's a gander," or "He's a goose." I don't. The last few years, under such circumstances, I always say: "He's a hen." To my mind this is expressing the very lowest possible grade of intelligence.

The way those hens of mine bungled their hatching business was something sad to behold. Eight or ten of them always wanted to sit on the same nest. After a great deal of trouble, I would at length get them separated, and establish each in a business of her own. I didn't like joint stock affairs.

Sometimes, these hens would stick to their respective nests for a few days, sometimes for a week, but some morning I'd go in and find them all on the one nest again, and not always on the same nest, either. Thus one outfit would be eternally ruined.

The hens that did bring out chickens, would always leave the nest as soon as four or five were hatched, and the balance would of course perish. Then these several hens would get out in the yard, and fight a pitched battle; but it was always the chickens that suffered, the hens acting commanders-in-chief, and the old reprobates didn't seem to feel the least distressed so long as they had one chicken to trot around after them.

Lastly, in the early spring, the hens that Nature was fool enough to permit to have chickens, used to march off with the brood through the snow and slush and water, and leave the little creatures dying here and there behind them, utterly indifferent; and

if there was one place particularly fatal to chickens, that place was sure to be a favorite resort of all motherly hens—a pig-pen, for instance.

I don't keep many chickens now, and have given up the speculation.

In the sping of '77 I sold my old oxen to Joe and he commenced farming on his own account. I bought another yoke, and did pretty much all my labor—with hired help. I found that I had made a serious mistake in plowing deep the first summer. The sod did not rot properly, and it was three years before it would harrow up good.

One end of my field was rather wet, and I conceived the idea of draining it down into a ravine at the south. It seemed all down hill to the ravine, and I wondered the water didn't run there of its own accord. However, as it did not, I concluded to help it with a few plow furrows. With these properly opened out, I felt prepared for the June flood.

It arrived in good time, and I went down to see how my water furrows were operating. Grand. Every one of them full, and running the water with a powerful current—on to the field. With as little delay as possible I closed those furrows up again.

Now, sir, I would have been willing to bet all the united monies I made out of my potatoe speculation, my pig speculation, and my hen speculation, that my field sloped to the south and to the west. But as water will not run in either of these directions, and will run freely to the north or east, I suppose I would have lost my money, and have therefore good reason to be thankful that I didn't find any one to bet with.

At threshing time I found that my wheat turned out twenty bushels to the acre. Counting up I dis-

covered that it cost me seventy cents per bushel, and as I sold for sixty, it really was not a very paying piece of business. I decided to rent in future.

Potatoes were an abundant crop this year. One of my neighbors gathered six hundred bushels off an acre, but mine did not turn out more than half that quantity. Besides being a much larger yield than in Ontario, I think they are also of finer flavor. At any rate I never cared to eat potatoes till I came to this country, and I am very fond of them now. The Early Rose is almost the only variety grown here for crop. Other varieties are experimented with.

During the winter I tried Indian trading for a change. There were a few Chippewa Indians back and forth through the settlement, with elk meat, moccasins, etc., which articles they used to trade for flour, tea and tobacco. I bought some of their elk meat at current price—three cents per pound. In Winnipeg I sold this meat for fifteen cents per pound. This gave me the idea that I might drive a limited though profitable trade with the noble red men. In my innocence and simplicity I was foolish enough to consider myself perfectly able to hold my own with the untutored savage.

Privately, I had a considerable regard for the Red Man, the result, I suppose, of Cooper's novels. I knew they were an ill-used race, and I thought they possessed more good points than people generally credited them with—at least, people who had anything to do with them.

It was one of my foibles that the red man was naturally honest, and that it only required fair-dealing to bring out all his latent honesty. This was the fundamental principle underlying my system of Indian trade. Accordingly, to the disgust of the

settlers, I raised the price of elk meat to ten cents per pound as soon as I commenced regular trading. I sold my goods at a reasonable profit of a hundred per cent., the same as Winnipeg merchants, and allowed the Indians a fair market price for their furs. Everything was lovely. The Indians came from miles around, and brought all their friends.

If an Indian came to me bankrupt and poverty-stricken, I supplied his immediate wants on trust. I wasn't afraid of them cheating a man who dealt squarely by them. In a very short time every Indian of my acquaintance became bankrupt and poverty-stricken, but they appeared to have no desire to run in debt beyond a few dollars. Like honest men they always came back with furs and paid the amount up, and at the same time availed themselves of the opportunity to run another bill of an equal amount.

There was one Indian that I especially admired. His name was Shebousy (phonetic spelling), and he was a fine specimen of the red man. He used to bring me customers, and finally I let him have a few goods to trade on his own account. He always appointed the day he would return and he never failed in putting in an appearance. One day, towards spring, he returned with most of his goods disposed of, and no furs.

He said he had had an awful hard time, and had to trade the goods for provisions. He asked me for a small outfit to try again.

He already owed me forty dollars, but I wasn't afraid to trust him—an Indian is different from a white man—so I let him have an additional twenty dollars' worth of goods. As he was leaving, I said,

"See here Shebousy; in a few weeks more I will

be giving up trading, and I want you to try hard now and get me all the furs you can."

"Not trade any more," said he.

"No."

"Oh, well," said he, "me get furs now—me pay; get furs after awhile—me pay; get furs next winter—me pay; always pay. You good, not cheat Indian. White-man always cheat Indian; you not cheat. Me pay—always pay."

There, wasn't that a triumph for fair dealing? If he got the furs now, he would pay me; if not, he would pay me as soon as he did get them. That is three years ago, and Shebousy hasn't got those furs yet. Last summer I learned that he lost the outfits I supplied him with at gambling, and since that I have ceased to expect Shebousy. I never saw him after that memorable conversation, and the remarkable part is that I never again saw any of my other old customers either, who came to me bankrupt and poverty-stricken.

I had quite a bale of furs. Two thousand muskrats, forty or fifty mink, a couple of hundred skunks, wolves, foxes, lynxs, etc. When I brought them in to Winnipeg to sell to the dealers, I discovered that all the mink and most of the muskrats were comparatively worthless summer pelts, and I had bought them for prime furs.

That was Indian trading enough to last me a lifetime.

In January I made a trip to Portage la Prairie mills with a grist of wheat. Hitherto, we had got our gristing done at St. Joe, Dakota, but in the fall the American custom officer at St. Joe announced that he would allow no more Canadian wheat to pass to the mills there without paying twenty per

cent. duty. We couldn't afford to pay that duty, and were obliged to go elsewhere. Some went to Winnipeg and others to the Portage.

The winter was unusually mild, and I rather liked my trip to the latter place. There was no snow, and wagoning was prime. Beyond the Boyne I overtook a couple of Boyne settlers on the same errand as myself, and we traveled in company. As there were no houses, we were obliged to camp out four or five nights, but the entire distance of thirty miles from the Boyne to the Portage, the trail skirted an immense belt of tall, thrifty poplar. At night we always camped where dead trees were abundant, and we felled these with our axes and made a great blazing fire twenty or thirty feet long.

The nights were frosty, but perfectly calm, and although we did not sleep comfortably exactly, still we had nothing to complain of. Every once in a while one of us would get up and replenish the fire. I used to lay awake and listen to the sharp, yelping howl of the little prairie wolves all around us. I have heard people call it a dismal noise, but I rather liked it; it was wild, certainly, but not dismal.

I was astonished at the immense stretch of timber. Before making this trip, I was as ignorant as the generality of folks regarding the timber supply of Manitoba. To most people, the name Manitoba suggests an unbroken stretch of plain, almost or entirely destitute of wood, and even otherwise well-informed newspapers fall into the general error, and publish articles bewailing the limited fuel supply of Manitoba. This a great mistake. Probably one-third of the Province is timbered land, but the difficulty is that it is not equally distributed. There is very little fit for lumber; but for fuel and fencing

the supply is perfectly equal to the demand for many, many years, if some means can be devised for getting at it.

The great bulk of it is poplar, and no better wood for general purposes can be found. Ontario people are inclined to hold a poor opinion of the general utility of this tree. This also is a mistake. Another great advantage poplar possesses, is its vitality. It will sprout from the roots as often as cut down, and grow with wonderful rapidity if the fire be kept out.

The land between the Boyne and Portage la Prairie is very sandy and poor. It is, besides, almost all marsh, and it is very doubtful if the trail we traversed could be followed in the summer at all. Poplar appears to thrive best in a wet soil.

As I have already mentioned, I leased my farm for the summer of '78. I supplied the seed and the land, the other man supplied the labor; and we halved the crop. I found this the easiest way of farming I had tried yet.

In the spring of the same year, Mr. Adam Nelson, a gentleman from Silver Islet, Lake Superior, brought in the machinery of a grist and saw mill, and erected a suitable building on his farm, four miles south of my place. This supplied one of the greatest wants of the settlement, and immediately led to the establishment of other conveniences.

Soon a little village sprang up around Nelson's mill, and Nelsonville now bids fair to become an important place in the Province. It is the only town site in Manitoba with a considerable farming country on all sides. Nelsonville, in fact, is the centre of the most extensive section of farming land in the Province.

I have said that the land here in the immediate neighborhood of timber is inclined to be wet. There is very little of it that could be called low, but periodically great floods of water come down the mountain from the elevated land beyond, and this water spreads out on the several flats I mentioned as comprising the timbered section. If the supply were not sustained the water would soon run off, as the land has a positive, though scarcely perceptible, incline to the east and to the north. All that is required therefore, to make the land perfectly dry, is some sort of arrangement by which the water will be prevented from spreading on it.

During the summer of '78 I made a start at solving this problem, by digging a ditch along the south side of a hundred-acre field—ditch on the outside, bank on the inside. This ditch I placed on the line between myself and neighbor. I drove little pickets along the top of the bank, twelve feet apart, nailed a small poplar pole on the pickets about a foot and a half from the ground, and thus made one of the best fences in the settlement. It will turn anything in the shape of stock. I proposed to extend it the following summer.

My wheat this year was excellent, but in the midst of harvesting operations, and when about half through, one of the most violent hail storms it has ever been my fortune to witness set in, and in the course of half an hour all the standing grain was flattened down, broke up, and beat into the ground. Fortunately, the storm was a limited one, confined to a strip three or four miles wide. Inside of that belt, however, the reapers went out to reap no more that season. I do not exaggerate when I say that lumps of ice as large as hen's eggs covered the ground.

Even the scrub and oak trees were partly stripped of their foliage.

If this hail storm had arrived other years, when I was working the farm myself, I would not have thought so bad of it, considering the large saving effected in harvesting operations; but to come this year, when another fellow had all the labor to perform, was really too bad, and I felt myself severely ill-used.

Oh, well, the ways of Providence are inscrutable; I always felt that when I had any work to do.

At threshing time our grain turned out twenty-eight bushels to the acre for the ground we cut, without allowing anything for the damage done by the hail while the sheaves were in stook. This I consider a good return. Some of my neighbors have had crops yielding as much as forty bushles per acre, but if any man tells you, as I have been told, that forty bushels to the acre is an average crop in Manitoba, put that man down as a liar; if a man tells you that thirty-five bushels is an average crop, consider that he prevaricates; if he says thirty bushels, consider him honest; but if he mentions twenty-five bushels, believe him.

The fall of '78 was a very wet one—the only wet one during the seven years I have been in the country. In consequence, very few of the settlers got any fall plowing done. The spring of '79 opened with a rapid thaw and heavy rains. The water was unusually high, and the ground being already soaked full, it was late before farmers could get on their land—indeed, owing to the continuous rains, the soil was never in proper condition for the reception of seed. In April we had a flood, in May we had a flood, in June we had a flood, and in July we

had a flood. The weather then settled, and we had no more rain during the season.

But the damage was done. On all flat land the grain was drowned out. My crop didn't amount to shucks. Good thing I had rented on shares, wasn't it? This system pleased me so highly this year, that I concluded to always rent on shares. I accordingly traded off my implements and oxen for breaking, and as a half crop off the land I have now under cultivation will keep me in moderate comfort, I can devote the most of my time to that pastime I am so fond of—loafing.

Before settling down to it, however, I constructed a ditch half a mile long across the west side of my field, and another one a little longer on the north side. Thus I have my farming land fenced on three sides with a ditch fence—the easiest, quickest and best fence that can be constructed. Inside the ditch is a bank a foot and a half or two feet higher than the surrounding prairie, and when I view that ditch and that bank, I feel like telling the June floods of 1880 to come right along and investigate.

In the spring of '79 I found that my house was in the wrong place altogether. It was in the middle of my farm, half a mile from a road, and this, I felt, would be inconvenient. I concluded to build again. On the east side of my farm runs a high, sandy ridge, and here, in the lee of a little oak bluff, I erected a small frame house,—my present establishment. If I had had sense enough in the first place to choose this most desirable building site, my other buildings could now be utilized for stables and granary. As it is, I have yet to erect all my outbuildings.

This is a common error with new settlers. They pop their house down in the most convenient place for the time being, erect other buildings around, and then awake some day to the fact that they are in the wrong place entirely. For one thing, water cannot always be found where you want it on the prairie, and I know numbers of settlers who built their houses first and dug their wells afterwards, who would give a good deal to-day if they had just reversed the programme.

Of course, during these years, I have made numerous trips here and there around the country, and I will now briefly outline one of these to show the deplorable change in the country caused by the ever-increasing rainfall. It is to be hoped, however, that the cycle of wet seasons is finished, and there appears some reason to believe that such is the case in view of the wonted dryness of the latter part of '79.

In July of this year, I had occasion to go to Portage la Prairie, and, as I had some idea of the condition of the roads, I started on horseback. At the Boyne, owing to representations of people there, I left my horse and continued on foot. A few miles out, I struck across the country to the Dry Bed, over the prairie I had traversed a few years before with David McKinnon. I was an old stager now, and not a bit afraid of getting lost.

This section I remembered as a high, rolling prairie, with here and there a little marsh with the water all dried away. I remembered, also, Joe telling me how he had suffered with thirst while crossing this same prairie with a cargo of pigs. Remembering these things, I believed I could reach the Dry Bed without much difficulty.

A few minutes after leaving the trail, I struck

swamp, and for the remaining twenty-eight miles, did not travel altogether a quarter of a mile on dry land. A mile or two of swamp alternated with a narrow ridge of dry land a few yards across, that is a full description of the country. If I had known at any time before noon what lay ahead of me, nothing could have induced me to continue the journey. I was constantly expecting to reach the high rolling prairie, and believed I must some way have got off the proper track.

About noon I reached a few straggling poplars that I remembered to have passed the former time, and I climbed one of these and inspected the country in advance. A mile away the land seemed higher, rising up with a gentle swell, and away twelve or fourteen miles beyond, lay the dark bush on the Dry Bed.

I sat down on a fallen tree, with my feet dangling in the water, took out my lunch, ate a little, rolled up the balance and resumed my tramp, hoping soon to reach the high land. I should have known that at a little distance a stretch of low land has the appearance of high land, but for the time I forgot it. I don't know the cause of this delusion, perhaps the top of the long grass really is higher than the surrounding prairie, for the marshes are seldom much depressed; but it is a fact that strangers are very apt to imagine that they are reaching high ground when in reality they are about to enter a swamp. And this was my experience in the present instance—a swamp three or four miles across lay before me. Beyond this, higher land with two or three lonely trees, and I hoped to find it comparatively dry from there in. It might, however, prove to be only a ridge.

So far, the grass for the most part, was the ordinary dark green, rank marsh grass, standing about two feet high above the water, the water being from a foot to two feet deep. Half-way through this marsh, however, I passed a narrow strip of tall, white-topped grass, very much resembling Indian corn in appearance, but much finer, and here the water was up to my waist.

To my dismay, on reaching the high ground, I discovered that it was but a ridge a hundred yards across, and thence extended a vast marsh of white-topped grass reaching to the timber on the Bry Bed. Behind me twenty miles of marsh and bone-grass low land; before me, seven or eight miles of desperate swamp. Which would I attempt? that was the question I put to myself. I chose the latter, and entered the marsh with set teeth.

That was a terrible journey. The tall, white-topped grass waved a foot or two above my head, and prevented my keeping the timber in view, so as to hold a true course, and I had no compass. I dare say I would never have got through that marsh had I not here and there came across great patches of grass twisted and matted and flattened down with the wind. These openings enabled me to get a view of the timber again, and I would then correct my course; but the exertion required to force my way through these tangled thickets of rank, matted grass, was something terrible.

The water was nowhere less than waist deep, and every now and again I would come to extended tracts of bull-rushes, with treacherous looking stretches of open water in all directions. Here the water would be up to my arm-pits. I dare not waste time in the attempt to go around these

lagoons—I had to travel as direct as possible; I must either get through the swamp in daylight or perish. I knew it, and I was prepared to swim if need be. Often, while among these bull-rushes, with the bottom springing under my steps and bubbles rising to the top of the water for yards around, I despaired of ever getting through, but I struggled on. Wild ducks in thousands flew screaming on every side, and millions of little shell fish floated in the water.

After hours of this, I became so weary that I was obliged to pause for a time. For the most part the wind had leaned the grass in one direction, and I was crossing it at right angles. My right leg traveled comparatively free, but I had to force the left one through the matted grass. The violent labor had partially paralysed the muscles of this leg, and for some time I had been endeavoring to ease it a little by helping it forward with my hands.

I didn't know what to do, but presently it occurred to me that if I would eat a little it might help me. I wasn't the least hungry, but I took out my water-soaked lunch and ate all I could. It revived me wonderfully, and again I worked painfully forward.

At dark, I was close enough in to see the shadowy outline of the trees, and a little while after, more dead than alive, I reached the house of David McKinnon.

Here I remained a few days to recover, and I then got Mr. McKinnon to guide me to the Assiniboine. Marsh, marsh, nothing but marsh, save the little belt along the Dry Bed, and another little belt along Stinking River; but thanks to my guide I had no further hardship.

It is a general opinion with Ontario people, and with a great many people here, too, for that matter, that the Half-breed reserves comprise a large portion of the most desirable lands in the Province. This is a great mistake. Beyond all doubt, some of the Half-breed lands are most excellent, but a tremendous portion consists of lands at the present time utterly worthless, and considerable of it, perhaps, irredeemable. A great deal of the worst land in the Province is Half-breed reserve land. All this land that I have been describing, from the neighborhood of the Boyne to the Assiniboine, is Half-breed reserve land.

Returning, I came around by Headingly, thence to Stinking River, and so, over the old road, to the Boyne. This road, being the most direct from the Mountain to Winnipeg, is still used, but only in the winter. For three summers it has been all but impassable. On this, my last trip over it, I found water the entire distance—scarcely an acre that would be considered fit for farming purposes. What a change from the first summer, when we used to have to carry water with us to drink on the way.

The trail, of course wound round the marshes as much as possible, and except at the Big Marsh, which I had long since discovered, I had little difficulty in getting through, though for miles at a stretch I waded in water a foot deep. I was too old a settler, however, to mind the water, and on the old trail there was no grass to mat and tangle and bar my way. Another thing, before starting I dined on salt fish, and therefore when I did come to a narrow ridge of dry land, I hurried rapidly across it in order to plunge into the marsh again.

The road now chiefly used in summer leads

through the Mennonite settlement to Emerson—cars there to Winnipeg. This is a dry section of country, and the road is nearly always good.

There is plenty more that I could tell about, but a feeling of compassion for the reader induces me to cut it short, and as I have now brought my sketch down to the period of writing, I propose to close the narrative with a rather laughable episode that occurred a few weeks ago:

[I have exercised my brain for the last hour, trying to recollect what this episode was, but I can't recall it to save my life. I know it was an awful funny episode, and the reader will have to be satisfied with this assurance.]